

THE  
VIRTUOUS ORPHAN.

VOLUME THE SECOND,

PART IV.



I Have made you wait so long, Madam, for the foregoing parts of my life, that, I persuade myself, you will be surprized to hear from me again so soon. Your impatience is very obliging; and I intend to let you see I think so, by my extraordinary haste in sending you this Part soon after the last.

See, now, if my laziness is not of advantage to me? Perhaps you would not now have been pleased at my diligence; nor even have taken notice of it, had I been always so expeditious.

Sometimes even our faults are of service to us, and set us in a better light than if we never had them; because, whenever we mend, the contrast between what we were, and what we are now, is sure to heighten our real virtues, and give them a more distinguished lustre.

Do you remember Mr. De Beaufort? He was a perpetual grumbler, and of a most forbidding countenance: but, was he good-humoured for one quarter of an hour, he was more admired, and taken notice of, in that short duration, than he would have been in a year, had he been always agreeable; we then hardly ever knew a person of so sweet a disposition.

But I must begin my Fourth Part; for, perhaps, it is necessary for you to read it before you will be convinced that it is the Fourth. However, before I continue my history, I am to give you the portraiture of my benefactress, which I promised you, with that of the lady she brought with her; to both whom I

am under obligations worthy of an eternal acknowledgment.

Though I say I am going to give you the pictures of these two ladies, I only mean to give you the out-lines, and a kind of rough sketch; for it is impossible to paint them entire and perfectly like themselves. I am well acquainted with many persons whom I do not know how to describe; there is something in them which I cannot take sufficient hold of; that I only perceive for myself, but not for others; and which, if I was to attempt, would be very ill performed. These are objects of sentiment so extremely complex, and so nicely delicate, that they confuse me whilst I reflect upon them: I do not know where to take them, in order to express them in a manner capable of being comprehended.

Is it not the same with you? It seems to me, that my soul, on a vast variety of occasions, knows more than it can express, and that it has sensations of it's own very different from it's common ideas. But this thought will carry me too far; let us return to our ladies and their pictures: they will be very imperfect and short; at least, I am afraid so; and I tell you of it beforehand, that you may chuse either to read them, or pass them over.

My benefactress was about fifty years old: though she had been a fine woman in her youth, yet she had something so good and condescending in her look, that blunted her charms, and hindered their being so piercing as they would have been; for it is the awe and

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respect

respect that beauty inspires, that makes us adored, by giving us a kind of elevation over our admirers. When a person has an air of so much goodness, she appears less striking; we only think of her amiable character, but not at all of the graces of her body: it renders the whole person, indeed, more esteemed, but her beauty less admired; and we are more pleased with her company than curious in looking upon her.

Thus, I believe, it had been with this excellent lady; no notice was taken of her attractive charms, but only that she was the best woman in the world: for this reason, I have been told, she has had few lovers, but many friends, and those even amongst our sex; but this is not to be wondered at, since there were always seen in her an innocent inattention; a mien simple, condescending, and affable, which did no violence to the self-love of her companions, and made her rather resemble a confidant than a rival.

Her features were worthy to be praised, though they were not formed to captivate. Her eyes demanded more friendship than love. This dear lady had a shape justly proportioned; and which, if she had pleased, would have appeared perfectly genteel. But this was not what she aimed at; for she had no other motion than what was natural and necessary, and which was expressive of a soul full of innocence and truth.

As to her wit, I believe it never was said that she had any, though nobody could ever say she wanted it. Her conversation pleased every body, without having any thing in it remarkably shining. She said nothing that was either smart or weak; but her discourse was all sweet and sensible: was the subject of conversation the most indifferent to her, she still kept up her character, and thought or said nothing but what proceeded from that stock of goodness which was the basis of her actions.

But pray, Madam, do not imagine that this benevolent temper was a blind and sottish passion, the disposition of a weak and pusillanimous soul, which appears ridiculous even to the persons who profit by it. No, hers was a virtue; it was the sentiment of an excellent heart, that instantly took the impression of another's grief; it was a delicacy for the happiness of others, which had infinitely more charms than

the most sparkling wit; it was a frank and genuine benevolence, conducted by reason and good sense.

I should not tell you that this lady had a nobleness of soul; this, perhaps, would confound your ideas, as it is a character too commonly usurped to disguise and palliate ostentation. Her dispositions to goodness were more simple, more amiable, but less brilliant, and those persons, to whom it is commonly ascribed, have very often not the best hearts: they are so transported with the pleasure and the glory of their generosity, that they neglect numberless little duties. They love to be praised; whilst she, on the contrary, esteemed it too mean to make this the sole end of her actions. She never shewed her beneficence because of the honour that accompanies it, but because you had need of her assistance; her design was to remove your anxieties and give you repose, that she might share in your tranquillity.

Every testimony of gratitude gave her a sensible pleasure, because she looked upon it as a proof of your content; for, whenever she was loaded with many acknowledgments for her kindness, she thought you found the benefit of having received them; and thus she loved to think of them: for, whatever you said to her, it was only your joy and satisfaction that could be her recompence.

One thing I forgot, that is very singular; which is, that, though she never boasted of her own good actions, you might safely boast of yours before her without fear of her taking offence. The pleasure of hearing you say that you were good, or had been so, shut her eyes to your vanity, or else persuaded her that it was very allowable, and what she would contribute to augment as much as she could. 'Yes, you are in the right to esteem yourself; nothing is more just,' would she say.

With respect to those who value themselves without any merit, who pique themselves on their rank or riches, a sort of people insupportably burdensome to every body else, they did not at all disturb her; she did not love them, and that was all; she had only a kind of cool, tranquil, polite antipathy for them.

But the spreaders of slander and defamation



famation she could not bear; they fatigued her still more, because their fault was grating to her natural goodness; whilst the vain boaster only shocked her reason and the simplicity of her heart.

She pardoned great talkers; and would laugh heartily at the uneasiness they gave her, whilst they thought they had been entertaining her.

Did she find persons of an obstinate disposition, who refuse to hear reason, she heard them with patience, and was not at all the less their friend. 'Well,' she would say, 'they are honest people, however: they have their faults; and no person is exempt from them.' Every thing that did not proceed from a malevolent disposition, appeared a trifle to her. Her tender heart never abandoned any person to misery: neither the liar, whom she heartily pitied; nor the ungrateful, who is insensible of the most refined pleasure that fills the human breast. But she was truly cold to the malignant spirits; she would, however, assist them; but she always did it without that delight and relish which accompanied her other acts of beneficence. These were with her the truly wicked, and the only persons with whom she was at variance, and against whom she had a natural and invincible hatred.

A coquette, who would captivate every man, was much worse in her esteem than a woman deluded through excess of passion for one. Because she thought it a less crime for a person to be weak, than to render others so; and that it was better to want wisdom than principles, as a weak heart is preferable to an impertinent and corrupt one.

She had a greater attachment to the moral virtues, than to the peculiar duties of Christianity; regarded more the punctilious exercises of instrumental religion, than she complied with them; honoured more the very devout, than the thought of being so herself; loved God more than she feared him, and conceived of his justice and goodness in a manner almost peculiar to herself; and from the benevolent dispositions of her own tender heart, justly inferred what must be those in the tender Parent of mankind, who had fixed them there.

Such was this amiable, this charming lady, of whom I have still many

things to add; but I must omit them; I have already been too long: if you think so, remember that it is my benefactress, and that I am very excusable if I have a little forgot myself, and been lost in the pleasure I have taken in speaking of her.

There yet remains another description; and that is of the lady that came with her: but do not be afraid, I shall not trouble you with it at present; I ought to spare myself a little, for I suspect that it will not be short, nor indeed very easy; and therefore it is proper we should both take breath. I owe it to you, however, who will dispense with my promise of placing them together. I foresee that it will be in this Part; but, I assure you, not till near the conclusion; and, perhaps, you would not be sorry if you found I entirely omitted it: you may expect, at least, to find something very singular in it. You have just seen the picture of an excellent heart; but that which I have still to paint will be as good a one, though very different from it: for, as to her mind, it had all the solidity of the other sex mixed with the delicacy of ours.

But it is time to continue my narration. 'How do you do, child?' said my dear friend to me, as she entered the parlour. 'Here is a lady who is desirous to see you; for I have been saying something to her in your favour: and I shall be as much pleased as she at her knowing you, that she may love you as I do.—Well, Madam,' added she, addressing herself to her friend, 'there she is; how do you like her? Is it not true that Miss is genteel?'

'No, Madam,' replied the lady, with an air of friendship; 'no, she is not genteel: excuse me, Madam, your character is not just; you speak with the modesty of a mother. For my part, who am a stranger, I must tell you frankly what I think; and that is, that she is charming; and, indeed, I never saw a more amiable form, or an air more noble.'

I cast down my eyes at this flattering discourse, and could only answer with my blushes. They sat down, the conversation still turning upon me—'Is there any thing in Miss's look which could preface the misfortunes she has suffered?' said Mrs. Dorbin, (this

was the lady's name;) 'but soon or late every one has troubles in this world; and hers are passed, I dare say.'

'I believe so, too,' answered I, modestly: 'since I have had the happiness to meet this lady, who has been so good as to interest herself in my welfare, I may reasonably hope that my happiness is begun.' At this my benefactress advancing, put her hand to the rails to take hold of mine, whilst I could only put two or three fingers through—'Yes, my dear,' said she, 'I love you, and you deserve it: from henceforward you shall have no inquietude, no care, to disturb you. What I have hitherto done for you is nothing; do not speak of it. I have already called you my daughter; imagine that you are so, and that I love you as much as if you were.'

This answer touched me; my eyes grew moist: I endeavoured to kiss her hand, of which she could only give me two or three fingers.

Upon this Mrs. Dorfin cried out—'What an amiable creature!—Do you know that I am a little jealous of you, Madam; for she loves you with so good a grace, that I must make pretensions to her love too: you are her mother; and I must be, at least, her friend.—Do not you consent to it, Miss?'

'Madam,' returned I, 'my respect forbids my saying yes; I durst not take that liberty: but if I should be so blessed, I should look upon this as one of the most happy days of my life.'—'You are in the right, child,' said my benefactress; 'and the greatest service I can do you, is, to desire this lady to give her word that she will grant you her friendship.—You promise it, Madam?' added she, speaking to Mrs. Dorfin; who, with an air of condescension, replied—'I give it her then, on condition that, next to you, she will love nobody in the world so much as me.'

'No, no!' said my mamma; 'you do not do yourself justice: I forbid her making the least difference between us; and, I dare say, she will obey me.' I still cast down my eyes; saying, very sincerely, that I was both confused and charmed.

Here my benefactress looked at her watch—'It is later than I thought it

was,' said she: 'I must go presently; I shall make you but a short visit at present, for I have many others to make. I am pretty much fatigued, and design to be at home betimes to-night; for I had not any rest all last night, I have been perplexed with so many different thoughts.'

'Indeed, Madam,' said I, 'I thought you seemed a little melancholy,' (and that was true;) 'and it made me uneasy. Pray, has any thing disturbed you?'

'Yes,' replied she: 'I have a son, who is a deserving young gentleman, and who has hitherto given me the highest satisfaction; but now he has very much displeased me. I was willing to have him married: a very advantageous match offered; the lady was rich, amiable, and of a good family; her relations approved of it, and were desirous to hasten the ceremony; and my son himself, a month ago, consented that the friends on both sides should meet to agree upon articles. He has been introduced to the young lady; has seen her more than once; but for some weeks has neglected coming to a conclusion: he seems to be grown quite indifferent to her. His conduct afflicts me extremely; especially as I am under a kind of engagement to a very considerable family, to whom I do not know how to excuse the shocking indifference he has lately expressed.'

'I cannot believe it will last long,' said Mrs. Dorfin; 'and, I repeat it to you again, your son is no fool: he has wit, good-sense, and honour. You know his tenderness, and the deference and respect he has always expressed for you; and, I am persuaded, you have nothing at all to fear. He shall dine with me to-morrow: he will hear what I have to say. Come, leave it to me; I will talk to him: for to say that the girl he found in returning from mass has made him averse to the marriage, I have already told you, is what I can never believe.'

'In returning from mass, Madam!' said I, a little astonished, because of the conformity this adventure had with mine.

'Yes, in returning from mass,' answered Mrs. Dorfin: 'they came from church'

'church together; but there is no probability that they have seen each other since.'

'Oh, but they represent her so very beautiful! it is that alarms me,' said my benefactress; 'and you know, when she was gone, the measures he took to find her out.'

'The measures he took!' another motive for me to listen.

'O dear Madam, with what little reason do you disturb yourself!' cried Mrs. Dorfin. 'She is a pretty girl, it is true; but what reason can you have to think that she has turned his head? for it cannot be questioned but she must be some tradesman's daughter, dressed in her best cloaths because it was a holiday.'

'A holiday! Oh! is it then me?' said I to myself, trembling, and not daring to ask any more questions.

'I would ask,' continued Mrs. Dorfin, 'if a lady of distinction would have walked alone through the streets, without a footman, without any one to attend her, as you find she did? But, what is more, she herself seemed conscious that she was not suitable to your son; for she would neither tell him where she came from, where she was going, or where she lived: so, however enamoured you suppose him, where will he find her again? He has taken every step for that purpose, you say; his servants tell you that he made his valet run after the hackney-coach which carried her away;' (Oh, how my heart beat here!) 'but is it possible for a man to keep up with a coach? This same valet, indeed, when you examined him, told you he ran after it, but at last lost sight of it.'

'So much the better,' thought I here: 'it is no more me; the valet that followed me saw me set down at our door.'

'But the fellow has, perhaps, deceived you?' continued Mrs. Dorfin. 'You are sensible he is in his master's confidence.'

'Oh, that is very likely too!' said I to myself; 'it is certainly me!'

'Well, we will suppose that he saw the coach stop,' continued the lady, 'and that your son knows where this pretty creature lives, what can you conclude from it? that he has taken such a violent passion for her, that he would

sacrifice to her his fortune, and all the advantages of his birth? that he would forget who he is, and what he owes to you and himself? Is this your son? Can you recollect his ever being guilty of such a piece of extravagance? There is scarce room to fear his being so weak and thoughtless; you cannot suspect it. I will allow that the girl might be agreeable to him; that she might be formed to please; and a man of his age and condition might have a fancy to see how far such an adventure would carry him: this is all that can be in it; you may compose yourself. I will promise you we will marry him, if we have only the charms of this little adventurer to combat with. A formidable enemy indeed!'

'Little adventurer! what an ill-boding epithet! shall I never be able to disengage myself from this painful situation?' said I to myself. However, had the ladies left off here, I should not have known what to hope or fear; but my benefactress presently cleared up every thing.

'I should have been of your opinion,' returned she, with an air of inquietude, 'if I was not told that my son is grown peevish since this unhappy adventure; and it is certain I have found him entirely changed. You know he is naturally of a gay disposition; but now I never see him but he looks dull, perplexed, and thoughtful: his friends take notice of it; the chevalier, who used to be continually with him, is become a burden to him; his company fatigues him, and accordingly yesterday he was denied to him. Add to this, the running about of the valet I mentioned, who is sent out four times every day; and with whom, when he returns, he has always a long consultation in private. But this is not all: I forgot to tell you one thing; and that is, that I have been this morning to speak to the surgeon that was sent for to examine the young woman's foot.'

This was a circumstance that at once struck me. At the article of the foot, figure to yourself the poor orphan humbled as low as possible. I do not know how I did to breathe for the terrible palpitation that seized my heart. 'Oh! is it then me?' thought I. 'Methinks I am going out of the church; that I find

‘ I find myself in the street where I fell,  
 ‘ dressed in those hateful cloaths Mr.  
 ‘ De Climal had given me, adorned  
 ‘ with all the trifles that had procured  
 ‘ me the title of a smart lass in her  
 ‘ holiday cloaths.’

What a situation was this for me, Madam! But what most humbled and afflicted me was, the reflection that the noble and distinguished air which Mrs. Dorfin, at her entrance, complimented me with, and which my benefactress acknowledged me possessed of, would no longer be of service to me when I should be known. Was it for me to presume to break a marriage like this? I might have the mien of a lady of distinction, provided I had no other fault but being unfortunate, and while my charms produced no disorder; but when beloved of Valville, and guilty of the uneasiness he gave his mother, I might well be reduced to a smart lass, an adventurer, and a little creature beneath their notice, who was no longer worthy their care, and who had been very bold to presume to wound the heart of a gentleman.

But let us listen to my dear mother, who proceeded; while some hints now-and-then escaped her that helped to revive my courage. She was speaking of the surgeon, and went on.

‘ He told me,’ continued she, ‘ that  
 ‘ she was very young, but extremely  
 ‘ amiable; that she had the air of a  
 ‘ lady of the first quality; and that my  
 ‘ son, in the whole of his behaviour,  
 ‘ expressed a sincere respect for her:  
 ‘ and it is this respect that disquiets  
 ‘ me. I do not know how, though  
 ‘ you would persuade me to it, to re-  
 ‘ concile these things with the idea I  
 ‘ form to myself of the daughter of  
 ‘ some mean mechanick dressed up in  
 ‘ all her finery. If he has any real  
 ‘ love and esteem for her, it must be  
 ‘ such as will be dangerous, and carry  
 ‘ him very far. You must be sensible  
 ‘ that this does not agree with her be-  
 ‘ ing a girl of no education, and with-  
 ‘ out merit; and his tenderness con-  
 ‘ vinces me that I shall have nothing  
 ‘ at all to hope for from him: his hav-  
 ‘ ing sense and honour are the very  
 ‘ reasons that will prevent there being  
 ‘ any remedy to cure the unfortunate  
 ‘ passion.’

Now, put yourself in my place, and

pray consider the many melancholy con- siderations that at once crowded into my mind: but stay, however, there was one joined with them which was very agreeable. Did you take notice of that melancholy in which Valville was involved ever since the day we became acquainted? Did you observe the respect which the surgeon said he expressed for me? My heart, though full of trouble, had, amidst it's various perturbations, taken notice of these minute particulars: nor had the consequences, drawn from them by my dear friend, escaped my attention.

‘ If his passion is built upon a true  
 ‘ esteem for her, his love is real,’ she had said; and I was immediately of her opinion: this consequence appeared very just, as well as agreeable. Here I felt a mixture of shame, inquietude, and pleasure: but the pleasure was excessive; this idea of being truly loved by Valville had so many charms in it, that it inspired me with sentiments quite noble and disinterested. Indeed, the heart is in so good a situation when thus delighted, that you will not much wonder at the part it made me take, which was a sufficient proof that Valville had reason to respect me.

I was nothing; nor did I possess any thing worthy of rendering me considerable: but those who have neither titles nor riches to boast of, have a soul; a soul superior to the glittering splendor of wealth and greatness; that can command a more just respect, a higher veneration; and that can support it's dignity in the midst of the bitterest afflictions. Observe how mine extricated me out of this perplexing situation.

After Mrs. Dorfin had replied to my benefactress, in answer to what she had just said, this last person, rising up in order to go, resumed—‘ Since he is  
 ‘ to dine to-morrow with you, endea-  
 ‘ vour to dispose him to this marriage:  
 ‘ and, as I cannot be satisfied with his  
 ‘ adventure, I am resolved, at all ha-  
 ‘ zards, to place somebody near him, or  
 ‘ his footman, as a spy upon their ac-  
 ‘ tions; and I will have one of them  
 ‘ followed wherever he goes: by this  
 ‘ means, perhaps, I shall discover who  
 ‘ this little creature is. Supposing that  
 ‘ he has found her out, it is proper  
 ‘ we should find her out too; for it  
 ‘ cannot



'cannot be unuseful to know her.—  
'Farewel, Marianne! I shall see you  
'again in two or three days.'

'No,' said I to her, letting fall  
some tears; 'no, Madam, it is all  
'over: you must see me no more;  
'you must abandon me to the misfor-  
'tunes which follow me wherever I  
'go; for God will not suffer me to en-  
'joy a lasting repose!'

'What would you say, child? What  
'do you mean? Why should I aban-  
'don you?'

Here my tears ran in such abundance,  
that I remained some time unable to  
speak a word.

'Thou makest me very uneasy, my  
'dear child. Why dost thou weep so?'  
added she, presenting her hand as she  
had done some minutes before: but I  
durst no more give her mine. I drew  
it back, covered with shame, with  
words disjointed with my groans.  
'Hold, Madam!' cried I; 'you do  
'not know to whom you speak; nor  
'who it is you express such goodness  
'to. I believe it is I who am your  
'enemy: it is I that am the cause of  
'all your uneasiness!'

'How, Marianne!' replied she, as-  
tonished: 'you she that Valville met  
'and carried home!'—'Yes, Madam;  
'it was I myself,' I returned: 'I am  
'not ungrateful enough to hide it from  
'you; this would be a frightful trea-  
'chery, a monstrous baseness, after  
'all the care you have taken of me.  
'You see I have not merited so much  
'kindness from you, since you would  
'have been happier if you had never  
'known me, or I had never been  
'born: see what reason you have to a-  
'bandon me. It is not natural that  
'you should preserve the character of  
'a mother to an orphan whom you  
'know not, whilst she afflicts you;  
'and since a sight of her has taught  
'your son to disobey you. I am con-  
'fused and ashamed to think how  
'much you have loved me: you who  
'should rather have hated and despised  
'me. Alas! how much have you  
'been deceived! I sincerely beg your  
'pardon.'

My tears continued flowing, while  
my benefactress made me no answer,  
but looked upon me with an air of the  
most moving tenderness, with the tears  
standing in her eyes.

'Madam,' said her friend to her,  
drying her eyes, 'indeed this child  
'touches me extremely: what she has  
'told you is admirable. What a  
'great soul!'

Mrs. De Valville remained still si-  
lent, regarding me attentively.

'Shall I tell you my thoughts, Ma-  
'dam?' resumed immediately this  
amiable lady. 'You have the most  
'compassionate and the most generous  
'heart: but I put myself in your  
'place. After this event, you may,  
'perhaps, shew some dislike against  
'seeing her again; and may be against  
'continuing her under your care.  
'Will you give her to me? I will take  
'care of her till this affair is finished:  
'I do not intend to take her from you;  
'she would lose too much by that. I  
'will return her to you again as soon  
'as the marriage shall be concluded.'

At this discourse I lifted up my eyes,  
and gave her a look of humility and  
gratitude; to which I joined a slight  
inclination of my head: I say slight,  
because I imagined I ought to thank  
her with discretion. I had reason to  
express myself sensible of her goodness,  
but not to make her think that she gave  
me any consolation, as, indeed, she did  
not. I accompanied this with a sigh;  
after which, Mrs. Dorlin, resuming  
her discourse, said to my benefactress—  
'Think of it, Madam, and consult  
'with yourself.'

'Excuse me for a moment,' return-  
ed Mrs. De Valville; 'I will answer  
'you presently: let me first inform  
'myself of one thing.—Marianne,'  
said she, 'have you not heard of my  
'son since you have been here?'—  
'Alas, Madam!' answered I, 'do  
'not examine me on that head; I am  
'so unhappy, that I can only give you  
'fresh cause for grief, and therefore  
'make you more exasperated against  
'me. It is just that you should de-  
'prive me of your friendship, and  
'leave an unhappy girl, who has the  
'misfortune to be the obstacle of your  
'desires. It would be of no service  
'to you to increase your hatred, which,  
'above all things, I desire to avoid:  
'but, Madam, do not think I refuse  
'to tell you the truth; I know very  
'well that I am obliged to tell it you,  
'if you desire it. This is the least part  
'of what I owe you; but what with-  
'holds

' holds me is; the pain it will give you;  
' the aversion it will inspire you with;  
' and all the affliction that your dis-  
' pleasure will occasion me.'

' No, child, no;' replied Mrs. De Valville: ' speak boldly, and fear no-  
' thing from me. Does my son know  
' where you are? Has he been here?'

These questions redoubled my tears. I drew the letter I had received from Valville out of my pocket, which I had not unsealed, and gave it her with a trembling hand. ' I do not know,' said I, interrupted with sighs, ' how  
' he discovered that I am here: but  
' see what he has just given me him-  
' self!'

She took it with a sigh, opened it, ran it over, then cast her eyes upon her friend, who also fixed hers upon her. They both stood for some time looking upon each other, without speaking a word: I thought I even saw them shed some tears. At last, Mrs. Dorfin, shaking her head—' Ah, Madam!' said she, ' I asked you for Marianne;  
' but I shall not have her; I find you  
' will keep her yourself.'

' Yes, she is my child more than  
' ever,' returned she, with a tenderness that would not permit her saying any more; and immediately presenting me her hand, I took hold of it as well as the grate would permit me, and kissed it on my knees for a long time with an inexpressible eagerness; and I was so softened, that I seemed almost suffocated with my tears. This was followed by a short silence, which was so affecting, that I cannot yet think of it without feeling myself moved from the bottom of my soul.

Mrs. Dorfin broke silence first. ' Is  
' there no way for me to embrace her?' said this amiable lady. ' I never was  
' so affected in my life as I am now. I  
' do not know which of the two I love  
' most; the mother or the daughter.'

' Well, Marianne,' said Mrs. De Valville, when the various agitations of our minds began to subside, ' you  
' must never more, whilst I live, call  
' yourself an orphan. But let us re-  
' turn to my son. Without doubt it  
' was Mrs. Du Tour, the linen-dra-  
' per, that told him where you are.'

' Very likely,' returned I; ' I did not  
' however, tell her, because I was ig-  
' norant of the name of the convent

' when I entered; but the porter I  
' made use of to bring my cloaths hi-  
' ther, plies near her house, and he  
' might inform her: and then Mr.  
' De Valville, who had me followed by  
' his footman, till I was set down by  
' the coach at Mrs. Du Tour's, has,  
' without doubt, enquired of the good  
' woman, who could not help telling  
' him all she knew. This, I believe, is  
' the way he found me out: for my  
' part, I have done nothing to reproach  
' myself with; and have not at all con-  
' tributed to what has happened. And,  
' as a proof of this, since I have been  
' here, I have not heard his name men-  
' tioned till this afternoon, when he  
' brought me that letter, which he  
' could not have given me without a  
' stratagem.'

I had no sooner spoke, but I thought that I ought rather to have concealed this last article, which I had mentioned without considering at all the consequence. This was engaging my benefactress to ask an explication; and the disguise of her son was a particular that I might, perhaps, have concealed, without a breach of that sincerity and truth for which I began to value myself; an indiscretion that my excessive ingenuity had drawn me into: however, the word was spoke; but I found Mrs. De Valville did not at all need an explanation; she knew at once what was meant by it.

' A stratagem!' returned she; ' I  
' know what you mean; and I will  
' tell you how. As I was stepping  
' out of the coach, I saw, by chance,  
' a young man in a livery, coming down  
' from this parlour; methought he was  
' so like my son, that I could not help  
' being struck with the resemblance: I  
' thought of telling you of it, Ma-  
' dam; for I looked upon it as a thing  
' pretty singular, though I did not give  
' much attention to it.—But now,  
' Marianne, I find my son loves you,  
' I do not doubt but, instead of a man  
' that resembles him, it was he him-  
' self; was it not?'

' Yes, Madam,' returned I, after having hesitated a moment; ' scarce  
' was he here before you arrived. I  
' took his letter, without taking notice  
' who it was that gave it me; and I  
' should not have known him, but for  
' a look he cast at me. I started with  
' surprise:

‘surprize: we were told you were coming; and he retired with precipitation.’

‘By what I know of his temper,’ said Mrs. De Valville, speaking to her friend, ‘Marianne must have made a prodigious impression upon his heart. See what it has made him resolve! What a surprizing effect! To take a livery!’

‘Yes,’ returned Mrs. Dorlin, ‘this action certainly proves that he loves her passionately; but those are charms which conclude it much more strongly.’

‘But how must we act with respect to this marriage, which he has almost broke off; this engagement which I have undertaken with his consent? Valville will, I am afraid, never conclude it. But more; I must tell you, that, possessed with such a passion as this appears to be, I am afraid he will marry this child. Oh! what must we do to cure him of this passion?’

‘It would be hard, indeed, to teach him to overcome it,’ returned Mrs. Dorlin; ‘but I believe we may reduce it into the bounds of reason; and this we may certainly do with Miss’s assistance. It is a happiness that she is the person we have to do with: we have now seen an instance of the greatness of her mind, which proves what her gratitude and tenderness for such a mother as you will render her capable of.’

‘Now, to determine your son to fulfil his engagements, he can only be prevailed upon by your daughter; and this would be a procedure entirely worthy of herself: as she is the only obstacle, she should speak to him herself; for nobody else will be capable of making him hear reason.—I am persuaded, Madam, that he would obey you, if you insisted upon it; he respects you too much to be capable of rebelling against you; but you say you will not force him; and nothing can be more just than this resolution; for, by a contrary conduct, you would certainly render him unhappy; he would be made so out of complaisance and duty to you; and consequently consider you as the cause of a misery he might easily have avoided. On the contrary, Marianne, by a thousand reasons,

that will not admit of a reply, may possibly prevail with him to consent to his former engagements; she may persuade him, in as sweet and gentle terms as possible, and even with the appearance of regret, that he will love her in vain, and that she is not in a condition to return his affection; and, by this means, calm his heart, and convince him of the necessity he is under to marry the lady intended for him: thus he would be induced to marry her himself, and you would not appear to influence his choice. This is my opinion of the matter.’

‘It is a very good thought,’ returned Mrs. De Valville; ‘I like your advice extremely: but I shall add one thing. Would it not be proper, in order to take away all hopes from him, that she should pretend to be desirous of taking the veil; and even to add, that her situation will not admit of her taking any other course?—But, Marianne,’ said she, interrupting herself, ‘I would not have you concerned at what I say; do not think I insinuate that you ought to quit the world: I am so far from it, that I could not consent to it without the most visible and remarkable proofs of your being desirous of it; since I should be apt to fear that your small fortune, your apprehensions of future want, or the fear of being a charge to me, would be your most prevailing inducement. I would not have you mistake me, I say; I have nothing but my son in view; and would only point out the means to bring him to my purpose, and help him to surmount a love which you too well justify, in which I know he would think himself happy, if permitted to cherish it; and with which, indeed, I myself should be charmed, if the maxims of the world did not restrain me from acquiescing with it. For, alas! what is it you want? neither beauty, with all its most pleasing graces, the most sparkling wit, nor the unaffected goodness of a great and upright soul. These are endowments the most extraordinary, the most precious; these the true riches, the noblest portion of a woman in marriage, and these you enjoy in the greatest profusion; but you have not twenty thousand livres a year; he would make no alliances in marrying you;

nor do we know your relations, who, perhaps, would be an honour to us. The greatest part of mankind, my dear, have a superficial way of thinking, and, consequently, very false ideas; they are dazzled with the splendor of riches, and their ears tickled with the sound of titles: and yet to these I must give an account of my actions; to these, who would never pardon the misfortunes you have suffered; which they would falsely term defects. Reason would certainly chuse you for his wife; but an extravagant custom rejects you: these particulars my friendship induces me to mention, that you might not look upon the assistance I expect from you to induce Valville to conquer his passion, as a painful subject of humiliation.

Oh, dear Madam, or rather, dear mother! since you are pleased to grant me leave to call you so, how good, how generous is this! cried I, casting myself at her feet, 'to have so much regard and delicacy for a poor girl, unworthy such goodness, and whom any body else in the same circumstances would have treated with contempt, and loaded with indignities! What would have become of me, had not you taken me into your care? Without you, dear mother, I should, by this time, have had the confusion of begging my bread: and, notwithstanding this; you are afraid of humbling me! Sure there is not a heart like yours in the world!'

Oh, my daughter! cried she, in her turn, 'who could help being tender-hearted to thee? My dear child, you enchant me!'—O she enchants you at a very proper time, said Mrs. Dorbin, with a tender smile: 'but, pray, put an end to this discourse; I cannot bear it; you soften me too much.'

'Let us return, then, to what we were saying,' replied my charming benefactress: 'since we have concluded that you speak to Valville, shall we wait till he returns to see her? or, to be more expeditious, would it not be better that she should write to him to come?'

O by all means! returned Mrs. Dorbin; let her write: but I am of opinion that she should know first what he says to her in that letter in

your hand, which we have only read to ourselves. By that she will judge better how to regulate her conduct towards him.—'Yes,' said I, with an air of frankness and simplicity, 'I ought to know what he thinks; especially since I wrote to him the day that I came hither, about an hour before I entered.'—'Aye! how so, Marianne?' interrupted Mrs. De Valville.

'I was obliged to it, Madam,' returned I. 'I sent to him a bundle, in which was a gown, some linen, and money; the presents I had received from the gentleman I have already mentioned; who, out of a seeming pity, had placed me at Mrs. Du Tour's, but whose real designs were base and dishonourable. I wrote to Mr. De Valville, who knew where he lived, to desire him to be so good as to send him the parcel as from me.'

Hah! by what chance, said Mrs. De Valville, 'did my son know this gentleman?'

'Madam, you will be still more surprized,' returned I, 'when I tell you he knew him because he was his uncle.'—'What!' cried she, 'Mr. De Climal?'—'Yes, Madam, it was he himself,' replied I: 'it was to him the good monk I have mentioned carried me; and at your house I learned it was Mr. De Valville's uncle, because he entered soon after my fall had induced your son to have me carried in; and it was he, too, that young gentleman surprized at my feet at the linen-draper's, in the instant he was entertaining me with his love; and it was this discovery that made him propose to remove me from the neighbourhood of Mr. De Valville, that he might see me in secret without the dread of a discovery.'

'Just Heaven!' cried she, 'what do you tell me! What a weakness was this in my brother!—I beg, Madam,' said she to her friend, 'do not mention a word of what you have heard. If ever an adventure like this should come to be known, judge of the scandal it would be to my brother, who passes for a man of great piety; and who, I hope, has hitherto deserved it, however he has forgotten himself, and behaved ill in this instance. Poor man! what must he think of himself? How will he be able



able to reflect on this incident in his cool and secret moments? Well, let us leave him, and proceed to the thing in question: let us see my son's letter.' Here she opened it again. 'But,' said she, stopping short, and recollecting herself, 'I have a scruple that has started in my mind. Shall we do well to read it to Marianne? Perhaps she loves Valville. There is a great deal of tenderness expressed in it; she may be touched with it; and it would only cost her more pain to render us the service we require from her.—Tell us, my dear child; is there any hazard? What must we think? Do you love my son?'

'That does not signify, Madam,' answered I; 'it will not hinder me from speaking to him as I ought.'

'It does not signify! say you? You love him, then, child?' returned she, smiling. 'Yes, Madam,' said I; 'it is true I do: I at first sight conceived an inclination for him, without knowing it was love; I did not think myself in danger of feeling that passion, but only indulged the pleasure of looking at him. I thought him amiable; and you know I could not be to blame in thinking him so, since I only did him justice. He is a young man of such a graceful appearance, so perfectly agreeable, and so like you, Madam, (for you know I loved you at first sight) that I could not help being charmed with him.' At this, they both burst into a laughter. 'I could never be weary of hearing her,' said Mrs. Dorfin; 'and I shall not be able to avoid seeing her: sure there is not her equal!'

'I think so, too,' replied my benefactress; 'but, however, I shall chide her, for having told my son that she loves him; for such a conduct is very imprudent.'

'O dear, Madam! I never told him so; I never uttered a word like it. Dare a girl tell a man that she loves him? We may talk of such things amongst ourselves, because no ill-consequence can attend it: but he has not the least suspicion of it, unless he has guessed so; and if he has, it will avail him nothing. You shall see, Madam; I promise not to give you any uneasiness: it is true, he is

amiable; and one must be blind not to observe it. But what then! I assure you, I will behave as if he were entirely indifferent to me; for I should be very ungrateful to act otherwise.'

'Oh, my child!' said my amiable friend; 'it will be very difficult to bring thy heart to resolve to renounce him: the more I see thee, the more I despair of your ever being able to accomplish it. Let us try, however: see there, what he writes to thee.'

The letter was short; and, as near as I can remember, these were the words.

'IT is now three weeks, Madam, that I have sought you, and been dying with grief. I mention no more my love, it deserves no longer your attention; I would only throw myself at your feet: to shew you the affliction I am in for having offended you, I ask pardon; not with the hope of obtaining it, but to give you an opportunity of revenging yourself by refusing it me. You do not know how much you are able to punish me: but you ought to know it; and I only beg the consolation of telling it you.'

This was pretty near the contents of the letter. It penetrated my soul; and my heart felt the force of every word, which I am persuaded Mrs. De Valville took notice of, for she watched my looks attentively. 'My dear, the note is very moving, is it not?'—'I cannot deny it, Madam; for I durst not deceive you,' returned I. 'However, fear nothing; I shall not do my duty with the less courage.'

'But,' replied she, 'what offence is it that he speaks of?'—'It is the ill opinion,' returned I, 'he had expressed of me, when he found Mr. De Climal at my feet; but since he received my letter, where I beg him to send the bundle of cloaths to his uncle, he sees he has been deceived, acknowledges my innocence, and is conscious of his having injured me.'

'This,' said Mrs. Dorfin, 'is as strong a proof of his probity as his love. I am glad to see him do justice to Marianne's virtue; it is acting like an honest man: but the more he esteems your daughter, the greater will be the difficulty she will meet

Ma          'with

• with in bringing him to reason, and  
• making him comply with our de-  
• sires. Do not you think so?

• 'You are in the right,' answered my  
benefactress: 'but it is time to go  
• home; let us conclude upon some-  
• thing. We have agreed that Mari-  
• anne shall write to Valville.'—'A  
• word or two,' said I, 'will be suffi-  
• cient; and I will write before you,  
• Madam; the pen and ink are in this  
• parlour.'—'Very well, child; you  
• are in the right: a line will be suffi-  
• cient.' I immediately wrote as fol-  
lows.

• I Could not speak to you this after-  
• noon, Sir, though I have some-  
• thing to say to you.—

• But, Madam, when shall I desire  
• him to come?' said I to Mrs. De Val-  
ville.

• At eleven o'clock in the morning,'  
returned she.

• And I shall be obliged to you,' add-  
ed I, writing again, 'if you will come  
• here to-morrow morning at eleven  
• o'clock, when I shall wait for you.  
• I am, &c.' And at the bottom, only

• MARIANNE.

After I had directed this letter, I  
gave it my benefactress, who took the  
charge of sealing and sending it by one  
of the servants of the convent.

• Farewel, Marianne, till to-mor-  
• row,' said she, 'when I shall see you  
• again.'—'My dear,' cried Mrs.  
Dorset, with an engaging smile, 'think  
• me your sincere friend: I shall see  
• you again very soon.—I will have  
• her come with you, Madam, and dine  
• at my house; and if you do not bring  
• her with you, I promise you I will  
• come and fetch her myself.'—'We  
• will both wait upon you the first op-  
• portunity,' replied Mrs. De Valville;  
• after which, you shall have her as  
• often as you please.'

I made no answer to this but a smile  
and a low curtsy; after which, they  
went away, and left me with a mind  
serene and full of tranquillity. Who-  
ever had seen me would have imagined  
that I was dull and melancholy; but I  
was far from being so; I had only the  
appearance of this disorder, which was

the effect of that flood of softness which  
had just overwhelmed me.

I sighed, however, like a person whose  
mind was disturbed, and might perhaps  
be thought to have some reason for be-  
ing so, on account of the disposition of  
my affairs; for I loved a man whom I  
must think on no more; and this surely  
was a reasonable subject of grief: but,  
on the other hand, he tenderly loved  
me in return; a reflection full of un-  
numbered charms. This alone was  
almost sufficient to dissipate my uneasi-  
ness; it was a true honour, essentially  
necessary to give me patience to sup-  
port the rest: besides, I had just be-  
haved with so much generosity, had  
acted so conformably to reason, and  
given such proof of a disinterested gra-  
titude, that had drawn tears of admi-  
ration and pleasure from those two  
amiable ladies. I looked inward with  
complacency and delight; I approved  
the greatness of my own soul, and  
amused myself with those pleasing vani-  
ties, and the secret applause which sprang  
from every reflection: this dissipated  
the gloom, and presented all within  
bright and lovely.

But to proceed. He has told me  
since, that the freedom I took in writ-  
ing to him had disquieted him extreme-  
ly; and, indeed, this had but an ill  
appearance; there was nothing in it  
that had the air of an intrigue, and it  
appeared too innocent to promise any  
thing very favourable.

But, however this was, eleven o'clock  
was but just struck, when the abbess  
came herself to tell me Valville waited  
for me.

• Go, Marianne,' said she; 'Mrs.  
• De Valville's son asks for you. She  
• told me yesterday, after she left you,  
• that she would send him to see you:  
• he waits for you.'

My heart began to flutter when I  
heard he was there. 'I thank you,  
• Madam,' said I; 'I am going.' I  
went immediately, but with a slow pace,  
to get time to recover and fortify my-  
self. I was entering upon a painful  
scene, and feared I should want courage  
to go through it; I distrusted myself,  
and was apprehensive that my heart  
would betray me, and make me but  
poorly serve my benefactress.

I forgot to mention one article, Ma-  
dam, which gave me, on reflection,  
another subject of self-approbation. I  
endeavoured

endeavoured to divest myself of every charm that it was possible for me to lay aside: I appeared in no other dress than what I commonly wore on mornings, which I put on as negligently as I could; my linen, though very fine, was the same I had lain in, and was consequently tumbled; my gown was a very indifferent one; it was very old, and what I seldom wore out of my chamber. Thus my age, and my natural agreeableness, were all that remained, without the assistance of the least art to set them off and recommend them: however, I flattered myself with the thought that of these I could not be stripped, which helped me to support the abandoning every other ornament; which was a sacrifice I freely made to the friendship of my dearest friend. She had not, indeed, desired me not to be dressed; but I was very sensible that it would not have pleased her, if she had found I had been so.

Thus clothed, I appeared before Valville, who was dressed, and appeared extremely genteel; but with what a tender and respectful air! what a desire of pleasing shone in his eyes! He held a letter in his hand; which was mine, in which I had invited him to come.

'I do not know,' said he, shewing me the letter, which he kissed, 'whether I ought to rejoice or be afflicted at the order I have here received from you; but I have not obeyed it without an inexpressible inquietude.' This he spoke with a look expressive of the greatest fear and uncertainty.

'Sir,' returned I, extremely touched at this tender introduction to his discourse, 'pray sit down.' Here I hesitated, in order to recover myself, whilst he took a chair. 'Yes, Sir,' resumed I, with a trembling voice, 'I want to talk with you.'—'Well, Miss,' returned he, trembling too, 'what is the matter? What must I think of this interview? Your abbess, I believe, knows of my making you this visit?'—'Yes, Sir,' said I; 'she herself, calling you by your name, came to tell me that you desired to speak with me.'—'My name!' cried he; 'how can that be? I do not know her; nor have I ever seen her: you must have told her who I was; you have then had her consent for sending for me?'—'No, Sir, I have not made her my confidante: all that she knew was,

'that you were to be here; however, it was not I that informed her of it. But, Sir, I beg you would hear me: you would persuade me to think you love me, and I believe it is true that you do; but what design can you have in loving me?'

'That of being only yours,' returned he seriously, with a firm and resolute tone; 'that of being united to you by all the ties of honour and religion; and if there are any engagements more strong and binding, I will enter into them with a proportionably greater pleasure. Your enquiry into my design gives me no pain; for I do not see, Miss, how it is possible for a man to love you with other views. My intentions will not bear a doubt: I have only to know if they are agreeable to you, and if I may hope to obtain what will be the happiness of my life?'

How affecting was this discourse, Madam! I perceived the tears flow to my eyes; a sigh escaped me, without being able to suppress it; but it was as low as possible: mean while I durst not lift up my eyes to give him one look.

'Sir,' said I, 'you know not yet the misfortunes I have suffered from my infancy. I am ignorant to whom I owe my birth; I lost my parents without knowing them; and I have neither fortune nor relation: we are not made for each other; besides, there are insurmountable obstacles in our way.'

'I understand you,' returned he, with an air of despair and consternation: 'your heart refuses to yield to my desires, and unite itself to mine.'

'No, Sir, you are mistaken; that is far from being the case,' cried I, without being able to proceed. 'That is not the case, Miss!' returned he; 'why, then, do you mention obstacles?'

We were in this part of our conversation when my benefactress entered. Judge of Valville's surprise.

'What, my mother!' cried he, rising. 'Oh, Miss! all this was contrived.'—'Yes, my son,' said she to him; with a tone full of the sweetest tenderness, 'it was; I readily confess it; we would not endeavour to conceal it from you: I knew you were to be here, and we thought it proper I should meet you. But, my dear child,' added she,

addressing



addressing herself to me, 'have you informed Valville of every thing?'

'No, Madam,' said I, fortified by her presence, and animated by the affectionate manner in which she spoke to me; 'no; I have not had time: the gentleman is but just come, and our conversation hardly begun when you entered; but I will tell him every thing before you, Madam.'

'You see, Sir,' said I to Valville, who seemed surprized at the tender names we gave each other; 'you see in what manner Mrs. De Valville treats me: you ought to know how kind, how extremely kind, she has been to me, and what obligations I am under to her; obligations so great and numerous, that, were I to mention them, they would appear quite incredible; and you would be the first that would tell me that I should be unworthy to live, if I did not entreat you to think of me no more.'

Valville, at these words, held down his head, and sighed. 'Do you be judge,' resumed I; 'you need only consider who I am. I have already told you I lost my father and mother, who were assassinated on a journey when I was with them, and but two years old; and since that time, Sir, hear what has happened to me. My education was given me by a clergyman in the country, who fulfilled that task out of a noble compassion. His sister brought me to Paris; here she died, and left me alone without support: her confessor presented me to your uncle, who placed me at a linen-draper's; but after a few days abandoned me. I have already told you the reasons of his conduct, when I desired you to return his presents for me. I went to tell the monk my situation; and, in returning from him, I entered into the church that belongs to our convent, to dry up my tears, with which I was almost suffocated. My dear mother here came in after me; she saw me weep at a confessional; I excited her pity, and from that time became a boarder here: it is she that pays all my expences; who has bought me cloaths; who has furnished me with every thing, not only in the greatest plenty, but magnificence; and has accompanied these generous actions with such an engaging sweetness, such ten-

der and affectionate endearments, that I cannot call them to mind without melting into tears of gratitude and affection. She comes to see and discourse with me; she loves me, and treats me as if I was your sister; she has even made me forget that I am an orphan; and with reason too: I ought not to think I am so, since it is no longer true. Never had a daughter a better mother; nor experienced such happiness from that dear relation.' My benefactress and her son, at this part of my discourse, seemed moved even to tears.

'See the situation I am in,' continued I; 'see what I owe to Mrs. De Valville! You, I have been told, have sense and probity; I believe it true: speak, then, from your conscience, Sir, how would you advise me to act after what I have told you? You must think that those unhappy wretches who beg their bread are not so poor as I am: they have at least brothers and sisters, or some other relations; they have a country; they have a name to distinguish them from the rest of mankind, by which they are known amongst their acquaintance; but I have none even of these advantages; and therefore am more wretched and more poor than they.'

'Come, dear child, pray forbear; here is enough on this subject,' said Mrs. De Valville. 'No, mother, let me tell every thing.—I say nothing but the truth, Sir,' continued I; 'and yet, after all this, you ask for my heart; you desire to marry me: would it not be a fine present I should make you? would it not be a cruelty even to myself? Oh! what a heart should I give you? if not a wicked one, yet that gift would declare my want of judgment, my want of consideration and regard for you. It is true, I am agreeable to you; but you would not attach yourself to me, sure, for no other reason but because you think me handsome! You certainly believe I have a spotless character; and, if this is the case, how can you hope that I should ever consent to a love that would draw upon you the censure of every body; which would set you at variance with your family, with your friends, with every one who esteems you, and even with me too? For how severe must be your repentance,



‘pittance, when you would cease to love me; when you would find your self married to a woman who is the subject of publick ridicule; whom nobody would see; and who would only bring upon you shame and misery! Is this nothing?’ added I, with a tenderness that made me weep. ‘But, obliged as I am to Mrs. De Valville, how wicked a creature must I be, should I marry you? If I was capable of it, would you ever think upon me but with horror? Should I not be the basest and most ungrateful creature upon earth, especially as I know your engagements to a lady of great merit? Do not be surprized; Sir; I am informed of every thing. My mother came to see me yesterday, as usual; she appeared sad and dejected: I asked her the cause; she informed me that her son had displeased her. I heard her with attention, without knowing that I was the cause of her uneasiness. She told me she had the greatest reason to be satisfied with your conduct, till you had seen a young girl—Here she related our history: and the girl who disturbs you; who induces you to break your word; who now afflicts my dear mother, and who has robbed her of the respect and tenderness of her son; I found to be me, Sir; me, the pensioner that she supports and loads with kindness! After this, Sir, see if, with honour, with probity, with a worthy, tender, and generous heart, which you have been accustomed to preserve; see, I say, if you can wish me to love you, and if you yourself could have the courage to love such a monster as I should be, could I listen to your passion? No, certainly. I find you are touched, Sir, with what I tell you: you weep; it is tenderness, surely, for my mother, and pity for me.—Oh, Madam! you shall be no longer full of sadness and inquietude: Mr. De Valville will suffer me to be no more the subject of your uneasiness; the subject of a pain that falls with double weight upon myself. I am sure he will no more interrupt the pleasure you take in succouring me; on the contrary, he will be sensible that he must share in it: he may love me still, but it must be a passion like yours. He will marry the lady in question; he will marry her on his

own account, because he owes it to himself; on yours, who have procured so advantageous a match, and one so proper to compleat his happiness; and on mine too, who entreat him to obey you, as the only proof he can give me that I have been ever truly dear to him. This is a satisfaction that he will not refuse to a girl that cannot be his, but will never be any body’s else; and who, for her part, will not scruple to tell him that, if she had been rich, and his equal, she has so good an opinion of his merit, she would chuse him before any other man in the world.—This is a consolation that I am willing to give you, Sir; and which I shall not regret, provided it restores your content and peace.’

Here I stopped, and wiped away the tears that began to flow in abundance; while Valville all this while held down his head; and, plunged in deep thought, was some time without answering me. Mrs. De Valville fixed her looks upon him while I spoke, with eyes swimming in tears: at last he broke silence, addressing himself to my benefactress.

‘You see, Madam, what is the object of my regard: put yourself in my place—Am I to blame to love her? Is it possible I should cease to do it? Can what she has just urged disengage my affections? O Madam, what a consummate virtue! But I must resign her; you will have me do it: she, too, desires it of me; and I will quit the dear invaluable treasure. I will marry another: I consent to be miserable; but I shall not be so long.’

Here his tears broke loose, and he no longer endeavoured to restrain them. Mrs. De Valville was touched with them, and wept as fast as he, without knowing what to say. We all three were silent, and nothing was heard but sighs.

‘Oh!’ cried I, agitated with love, grief, and a thousand confused emotions, not to be described; ‘oh, dear Madam, your grief is insupportable to me! Why did you meet us? You fill me full of despair; I cannot bear to see you thus.—Sir, you make my life quite insupportable!’—‘Why, my dear, do you complain?’ said Valville: ‘have I not already told you that I will resign you?’

‘Yes,

'Yes, you will leave me!' returned I: 'but, though you say so, you afflict my mother; you deprive her of life; you threaten her with your being miserable. Is this the consolation, this the happiness, you give her? You ask what reason we have for complaint; what can you demand more than I have granted? If you are generous, if you are reasonable, ought you not to regulate your desires, and keep them in proper bounds? You cannot marry me; but you have this consolation, that I will never engage my affections to any other; and you will be always very dear to me, Sir: you will not lose me, nor shall I lose you; I shall be a nun, indeed; but it will be here at Paris, and we shall sometimes see each other. We have both the same mother: you shall be my brother, my benefactor, and my dearest friend; the only man I esteem, and whom I shall never forget.'

'Oh, my dear mother!' cried Valville again, throwing himself suddenly at her feet, 'I beg pardon for the tears I see you shed, which I am so unhappy as to draw from you. Do with me what you please; you are the mistress of my actions: but you have undone me! Why did you bring me here to raise my admiration for this dear, justly dear creature, and then snatch me from her? Have pity on my condition; you tear my heart with the most cruel anguish. Take me away! Let us go! I had rather die than afflict you thus: but you, who feel so much tenderness for me, think for a moment what will become of me!'

'Alas, my son! what would you have me say?' returned the lady. 'I pity thee, child; I excuse thee: you both touch me; and I confess to thee that I love Marianne as much as thou dost. Arise, my son; this has not succeeded according to my expectations; but it is not her fault: I forgive the love thou hast for her; and, if the world thought as I do, I should not be so much troubled, nor at a loss what to resolve.'

At these last words, which Valville at once put the most favourable construction upon, he cast himself again at her feet, from whence she had just raised him; and, taking one of her hands, kissed it for a long time, without speaking. 'Well, Madam,' said

I, 'will you love me still? Will you not, after this, as the only remedy, abandon me?'

'Heaven forbid, my dear child!' returned she. 'Why do you talk thus? Come, I desire you would compose yourself.—I am satisfied with you, my son,' added she, with an air of goodness that transported me. 'I will not press you to conclude the marriage in question, though it will displease a very worthy family; but I love thee better than them.'

'You restore me to life!' returned Valville; 'I am the happiest of all sons! But, Madam, what will you do with Marianne? Will not you permit me to see her sometimes?'—'You ask more than I know how to answer,' returned she: 'let me think of it; we shall see.'—'Consent at least that I love her,' added he. 'What would signify my refusing thee that?' returned she. 'Love her, child; love her, let what will happen.'

I had said some time before that I would take the veil; and was here, out of an excess of zeal, going to repeat it: but as my dear benefactress seemed to have forgot it, I suddenly reflected that I ought not to bring it to her remembrance. I had just exhausted my generosity, had used every argument I could think of to dissuade Valville from loving me; but as his mother had now permitted him to do so, as we had melted her heart into such softness, it was only for me to be silent. It would not have been proper for me to say—'Madam, take care what you do.' Such an excess of disinterestedness would neither have appeared reasonable nor natural; I therefore said not a word.

After a moment's pause—'What a dangerous little creature thou art, Marianne,' said she, rising; 'farewel.—Let us go, Sir,' added she to her son, with an engaging sweetness, who was still kissing her hand, which he held in his, the reason of which she seemed perfectly to understand. 'Yes, yes,' added she, smiling, 'I know what all this means. Do you coax your mother, child? I can fix upon nothing yet; I cannot bring myself to any resolution!—Adieu, child; it is late: I will return to see you very soon.' I saluted her without making any answer; and, as I had been crying, I was wiping my eyes with

with my handkerchief.—‘Why do you cry?’ said she: ‘I have nothing to reproach thee with; I cannot be angry with thee for being amiable. Go, compose yourself.—Give me your hand, Valville.’

She immediately went down stairs, assisted by her son; who prudently only spoke to me with his eyes, and took no other leave but a low bow; which I returned with an air full of diffidence, like a person afraid of taking too much liberty, and of abusing that generous lady’s indulgence.

Here I was left alone, much more agitated than I was when Mrs. De Valville left me the preceding night; since here was matter for many other quite different emotions. ‘Love her, child, let what will happen,’ my dear benefactress had said to her son; and then—‘We shall see; I do not know what to resolve upon,’ had she added: and from this I inferred, that she had ordered me to hope; which, indeed, I did; but called myself a fool to dare to hope on such slender grounds. On occasions like these we cannot help feeling a pretty deal of pain; for it is much better not to have the least glimpse of success, than to have one so faint as only to flatter the soul, to make it tremble with fear, and to fill it with the most painful uncertainty. ‘Shall I be so happy as to marry Valville?’ said I to myself: ‘I cannot believe it possible.’ But, however, I began to think I should be miserable if I did not. This was all the knowledge that my heart had gained from the uncertain discourse of Mrs. De Valville; I had learned a new way to torment myself.

I could not sleep that night, and hardly got any rest the two following; for I passed three days without hearing any thing of them; but, if I remember right, it was not without a little repining at my dear benefactress. ‘What! can she determine nothing, then?’ said I sometimes. ‘Will she never come to a resolution?’ And here, I believe, I could not help blaming her.

At last the fourth day appeared, and I heard nothing of her; but, about three in the afternoon, I was told that Valville asked for me: and I had immediately leave granted to see him; which, however, I did not accept. I felt I loved him infinitely more than I had ever done; I had an extreme desire to

see him, and the greatest curiosity imaginable to know if he had nothing new to tell me relating to our mutual passion: but, in spite of all this, I restrained myself; I refused to go to him, because I was sensible that if Mrs. De Valville should know it, it would add to her esteem. Thus my refusal was only a laudable piece of artifice. I then sent word to Valville to excuse my seeing him, except he came from his mother, and that I durst not presume to do it, since she had not previously informed me of his visit; as, indeed, she had not.

Valville durst not deceive me; and was wise enough to retire. This prudent piece of conduct cost me very dear. I began to repent it, when he sent me word he would come again the next day with his mother: this news was necessary to compose the painful perturbations of my mind.

The next day we were to have a ceremony at our convent; when a young religious was to take her vows. You know, Madam, on these occasions the nuns appear openly, and the curtain is drawn from the rails. Here was I seated when Mrs. De Valville entered the church, who, with her family, were invited by the young nun’s relations. She came pretty late, and therefore went directly into the church. As I was ignorant of her being invited, I was agreeably surprized to see her coming up the aisle towards the rails, supported by an elderly gentleman of a good mien. A throng of other persons followed; but I did not take my eyes off this lady, who did not yet see me: at last, she took her seat with the gentleman by her side; then casting a look on those that followed, I perceived Mr. De Climal and Valville.

‘What! Mr. De Climal!’ said I to myself, with a mixture of astonishment and trouble. I could not help being sorry to see him there, though I knew not whether his presence would be of any consequence to me or not: I looked upon him as a wicked man, whom my presence was sufficient to disconcert. But this was nothing in comparison of the painful and mortifying circumstances that must attend his seeing me, which I foresaw would cover him with extreme confusion. I only wanted for Mrs. De Valville’s seeing me, to pay her my respects; which I

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knew that engaging lady would return with that easy, tender, and obliging freedom, which was almost peculiar to herself. But what would he think of this familiarity? What dreadful consequences, Madam, would he not infer from it? Imagine how detrimental it must appear to his reputation; and how much a villain who fears you, is himself to be feared. These ideas gave me a confused kind of agitation.

His nephew saw me first, and instantly saluted me with an undescribable air of gaiety and confidence, which seemed to preface that our affairs were in a happy situation. Mr. De Climal, who was looking another way, did not see him, for he was speaking to the gentleman that sat by Mrs. De Valville. This lady attended to what they were saying, and had not yet looked to the side where we were. At last she cast her eyes upon us, and perceived me.

This look was returned by a deep curtsy, which drew from her demonstrations of friendship; which she expressed by waving her hand, and an engaging smile of complacency. Her brother, who was pulling out of his pocket a kind of breviary, took notice of these signs, followed them with his eyes, and saw the little linen-drawer; who did not appear to have lost any thing by casting him off; and whose dress was such as not to allow her to regret the bundle of cloaths she had sent back.

This poor man, (for the time is coming when I must soften my expressions for him) this poor man, I say, to whom, by a kind of fatality, I was to be ever a subject of new alarms and embarrassments, lost all countenance at seeing me, and had not the confidence to look in my face.

I in my turn blushed too; but like an enemy bold and displeased, who had the advantage of a good conscience, and who could not but confound a guilty mind inferior to its own. I doubted whether he would salute me or not; but I found he avoided it: and I imitated him out of haughtiness, prudence, and even a kind of pity for him; for I was at once agitated by all these various sensations.

I observed Mrs. De Valville took notice of it; and, I believe, saw his disorder, which the sight of Valville, too, augmented. The service began;

and we had a sermon, which, though a very fine one, was far from deserving the character of a good one: a flow of senseless periods streamed from the preacher's lips, while the trickling nonsense was dressed in all the flowers of rhetoric. The priest seemed mightily delighted with his own eloquence, and displayed the greatest vanity in declaiming against the vanity of all terrestrial objects; a vice very common amongst our clergy, who have less regard to the instruction of others than their own applause.

The ceremony being finished, Mrs. De Valville asked for me; and came to the parlour with her son, while Mr. De Climal retired. 'How do you do, my dear?' said she. 'I am only come to speak a word to you: my company wait for me below, except my brother, who is gone. Here is Valville, who loves you with the utmost tenderness: he continually persecutes me with his passion; and is perpetually on his knees before me, to obtain my consent to the accomplishment of his desires. He tells me I shall render him miserable if I oppose his happiness; that his passion is unfermountable; that he must ever love and adore you, and make your felicity inseparable from his own. I must surrender; I cannot sincerely blame his choice. Thou art worthy of his affection; and that is enough for a man who loves thee, and who is rich: therefore love each other; I permit you to do it; any other mother, besides me, would not suffer this. According to the maxims of the world, my son acts a very foolish part; and I shall not be reckoned more wise to suffer him to do so: but on this, he says, depends the repose and all the comfort of his whole life; and it must be a heart very different from mine that could resist the force of such an argument. I am persuaded that Valville in this does not act contrary to true honour; that he only discards an established custom; and only injures his fortune by refusing to augment it: he assures me that he cannot live without thee; and I am sensible of all the merit he finds in thee. Nothing here opposes you but the prejudices of mankind; God nor reason does not do it.—It is your business, Sir,' added she, turning to her son: 'you are of a considerable family;



'mily; and, as we do not know that of Marianne, pride and avarice would not have you marry her; but you do not listen to them; you only attend to your love. For my part, I am neither proud nor interested enough to render me inexorable; and I only hear my tenderness; you force me to it by the fear of rendering you miserable. I must act either as thy tyrant or thy mother; but I chuse, and shall always glory in being the latter. May Heaven bless the motives that induce me to give my consent! But, whatever happens, I should rather chuse to blame my indulgence, than an inflexibility, which will be of no advantage to thee; and which might, perhaps, be attended with the most fatal consequences.'

Valville, at this discourse, wept with joy and gratitude. As for me, I was so moved and penetrated, that it was impossible for me to pronounce a syllable; my hands trembled, and I only expressed my thoughts by short and frequent sighs.

'Thou sayest nothing, Marianne,' said this amiable lady; 'but I understand thy silence; and, indeed, cannot help being sensible of the joy I give you both. Heaven might have destined me a daughter-in-law that would better please the world; but not one more agreeable to my own heart.'

Here I broke into a sudden transport. 'Oh, my mother!' cried I, 'you kill me with excess of kindness! I shall never have that gratitude and tenderness such goodness demands!' My tears forced me to stop here, unable to proceed. I cast myself at her feet, and put some of my fingers through the rails to take hold of Mrs. De Valville's, who presented hers; while Valville, lost in joy, and as if beside himself, seized both our hands, and kissed them alternately.

'Hark ye, my dear children,' said my charming benefactress, after having looked for some time with transport on her son, 'you must use some prudence on this occasion.—While you stay in this convent, my dear, you must not expect Valville's coming to see you alone. You have related your history to the abbess; she, suspecting that my son loves you, and that I consent to it, may tell the nuns, and

they again may speak of it to others: and this, if possible, I would avoid. It is not even proper, Marianne, that you should be long here; you shall stay but about three weeks or a month at farthest: mean time, I will look out for a convent, where they will know none of the accidents of your life; where I will place you under a feigned name, whilst I take measures to prepare the minds of the people for the marriage, to prevent its surprizing them. You ought, in the mean time, to have a little address, as well as patience; which you will readily consent to, since you have me for your confidantè.'

Valville, upon this, was going to renew his thanks, and I the testimonies of my respect and tenderness; but she arose up—'You know they wait for me,' said she to her son. 'Conceal your joy; I will dispense with your shewing it to me: I am sensible of what you feel. Come, let us go.'

'But, Madam,' replied her son, 'you tell me that you will not permit me to see her without you: does not that imply that I shall wait upon you sometimes when you come here?'—'Yes, yes,' returned she, 'to be sure; two or three times, perhaps, but not more: come, do you conduct me. There is a difficulty that I did not think of: it is, that as my brother knows Marianne, and where she is, perhaps we shall be obliged to marry you privately. You are his heir, son; and, for this reason, you should not disoblige him. It is true, that, after his adventure with Marianne, we may perhaps bring him over, and make him hear reason, and even consult with him what part you ought to take. He loves me, and has some confidence in me; I will take advantage of it, and endeavour to manage him.' After a tender adieu, she left me, more charmed than I can find words to describe.

I have already said, that, for three or four nights, my inquietude would hardly permit my taking any repose; but now a contrary passion had the same effect: nothing keeps us so much awake as extreme joy, or the delightful expectation of a great happiness; and, since this was the case, judge if I was in a disposition to take any rest.

Imagine what transports filled my  
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breast at the thought of marrying my dear Valville, and how my heart sprung with the rapturous thought; and then judge if, with these violent emotions, it was possible for me to enjoy any repose.

The two first days I was perfectly enchanted; then my satisfaction was dashed with a mixture of impatience. 'Yes, I shall marry Valville,' said I to myself; 'my dear benefactress has promised it me: but when will this happy moment arrive? I am to stay a month longer here, and then be placed in another convent, that measures may be taken to bring about this marriage: but will these measures draw out the time to a great length; or shall I be united to Valville shortly? I cannot tell what to think: no time is fixed for it; and it is possible they may change their minds.' And these thoughts extremely alleviated my satisfaction: sometimes I suffered almost as much pain as from a real chagrin. I would have skipped over this space of time, that appeared to creep on so slowly, and have joined the present instant with that from whence I was to date my felicity.

At last these various emotions began to dissipate: the soul accustoms itself to it's sensations; I began to be used to them, and grew familiar with my hopes and my inquietudes; I was then full of tranquillity. There had passed five or six days since I had seen my mother or her son; when, one morning, a letter was brought me from my benefactress, in which she informed me that she would come at one o'clock with Valville, to take me to dine with Mrs. Dorfin; and her note concluded with these words—

'And especially use all your art, and neglect nothing in point of dress: do you mind? I would have you put on all your charms.'

'And you shall be obeyed,' said I to myself, when I had read the letter. I had a design to dress me before I had read her orders for it; but this command flattered my vanity; and I was ready to indulge something of the coquette, and with the greatest alacrity I resolved to obey her.

By coquetry, I would here be only understood to mean, that I would employ all my skill in rendering myself as agreeable as possible; for the most per-

fect and exact decency in dress ought never to be dispensed with; and we should always endeavour to adorn ourselves modestly; since not only our natural prudence, but self-love demand it. When a woman shocks this native innocence, this essential delicacy of her sex, she loses the advantage of all her charms; her gross desire of pleasing is alone notice of; and those graces that would have been otherwise irresistible, do not reach the heart: she gives not that solid pleasure which arises from a passion founded on esteem; founded on virtue and conscious honour, 'which alone are truly fair.' In short, she only contributes to debauch and enervate the mind: and so far from rendering herself more amiable, makes herself more distasteful than the deformed and the ugly, who have a greater regard to decency. It is true that, with a wife and chaste behaviour, she will hear fewer encomiums on her beauty, fewer protestations of love; but her virtue will fill her admirers with awe, and an affection that fills the lover with diffidence; and though fewer would applaud her charms to her face, more would feel the effects of them, and would mention them if they durst.

This reflection has flowed from my pen before I was aware, but happily it is short, and I hope it will not displease you. To proceed.

Eleven o'clock was struck, and it was time for me to dress, in order to render myself compleatly agreeable, and assume the most engaging air; and as I had so good a design, I did not fear succeeding in it. This order, methought, was a proof that Mrs. De Valville persisted in giving me the heart of her son: if she had hesitated upon it, she would not have exposed him thus to all my charms.

These were my thoughts while dressing; and the exquisite pleasure I felt in reflecting that he would be sensible of the graces I put on, gave a fresh lustre to my countenance, and more fire and vivacity to my eyes. At last I was ready; the clock struck one: and while I waited for my benefactress, I amused myself with walking backwards and forwards in my room; and, from time to time, looking in my glass to retouch my head-dress, which, though very well before, I could not help endeavouring

deavouring to add something improving.

At last my door opened; and I was told Mrs. De Valville waited for me: I went down, and met her son at the gate of the convent; who conducted me to the coach, where I found my benefactress.

I must not forget to tell you that I pressed by some of our lay-sisters as I went down from my chamber; who appeared surprized to see me look so well. 'O dear Miss! how extremely handsome you are!' cried they, with a genuine simplicity that might be depended upon.

I perceived Valville was ready to entertain me with the same discourse; but he refrained, because a servant was present; and only expressed himself by gently squeezing my hand, which I returned by a look expressive of more sweetness than timidity.

'Mr. De Chimal is not well,' said he in the way; 'he has had a slight fever these two or three days.'—'I am sorry for it,' returned I; 'I bear him no ill-will: I hope it will not be attended with any bad consequence.' Here we got to the coach. 'Come, my dear Marianne,' said my benefactress, 'let us make haste, for it is very late. You look incomparably well to-day,' said she, as soon as I was seated. 'Yes, Madam,' said Valville, smiling, 'it is impossible to avoid being ravished at the sight of so many graces as are united in this charming girl!'

'But, Marianne,' returned Mrs. De Valville, 'you know we are going to dine with Mrs. Dorfin; and there will be a pretty deal of company; we have therefore resolved that I should introduce you as the daughter of one of my best friends, who died in the country, and has recommended you to my care: remember this, child. I should have loved thy mother, had I known her; and I now think of her as a friend I have lost.'

'Dear Madam,' returned I, extremely touched, 'forgive my want of expression to thank you as I ought: your goodness has daily augmented, since I have had the happiness to be known to you; every word you have spoken has been a fresh benefit, and has laid me under a new obligation to you.'

'Indeed,' said Valville, 'as there is no mother like ours, so it is not strange that we cannot tell her how much we love her.'—'Yes,' returned she merrily, 'I believe you love me very well; but you coax me a little, too.'

'I am going to introduce you, child,' said she, addressing herself to me, 'into the most choice and valuable company; they are all persons of wit and good sense: I will not direct you how to behave; you are unacquainted with the world, it is true, but that will not be any disadvantage to you; and I can carry you to no place where you will be less in danger of criticism on this account; for these persons ridicule nothing but what is really ridiculous. So, my dear, do not be diffident; I am sure you will not be disagreeable to them.'

We then arrived at Mrs. Dorfin's: we went in, and found three or four persons with her. 'Ah! you have brought her at last,' said she to Mrs. De Valville, on seeing me. 'Come, Miss; come, let me embrace you: I am glad to see you; we will now sit down to dinner; we only waited for you.'

However ignorant and unexperienced I was on these occasions, as Mrs. De Valville had observed, I had something of a natural taste, and a kind of penetration, which made me discover and dive into the hearts of these gentlemen. It was not their wit that gave me this knowledge; though it is certain they had more of it than common; and I heard them say many excellent things: but their address and manner enabled me to form a right judgment of them; they delivered themselves in a natural and familiar way, without the least mixture of art or stiffness; and their conversation was as free and easy as if they had been discoursing on the most familiar subjects. They had a delicacy of sentiment which appeared unacquired, and entirely natural to them; they did not seem to think they spoke better than others; they had only greater minds, and by that means they discoursed more elegantly, and more to the purpose. Here was nothing like an ambition of shining; though they shone in all they said: such a conversation, so excellent, so delicate, though so simple and natural,

ral, could not fail of charming me, and striking me with admiration. All was just and suitable; all sweet, facetious, gay, and sprightly. I had formed a very different idea of the polite world; I had represented it to myself as full of little frivolous rules, numberless insignificant punctilios, and of grave and important trifles difficult to learn; and which, however ridiculous in themselves, we must be acquainted with, upon pain of being a subject of publick censure. But, far from this, here was nothing that corresponded with these ideas; nothing that could embarrass me; nothing that could make me afraid to speak: nothing, on the contrary, that did not encourage me to bear a part in the conversation with freedom. Their wit supplied me with words, and helped me to express myself when I spoke obscurely; they then pursued the thought; expressed it for me, and gave me all the honour of it.

In short, they made me perfectly easy; and I, who had imagined that there was so much mystery in being polite, and had looked upon it as a science which was totally unknown to me, and of which I had no notion, was surprized to see that there was nothing very particular in it; nothing that appeared strange to me; but only something engaging, amiable, and extremely obliging: and, methought, this politeness is what every great mind finds in itself as soon as it sees it in others.

But we are at Mrs. Dorcin's, as well as at the last pages of this Part of my life. It was here I promised to introduce the portraiture of this lady: I have said it will be long, too; but I cannot tell whether it will or no. Perhaps it will be short, for I am very weary: these descriptions cost me a good deal of pains. But here it is, however.

This accomplished lady was much younger than my benefactress; she had a mixture of majesty and sweetness, joined with an open and most expressive countenance, in which all her thoughts were painted in the strongest colours; a countenance which was full of unnumbered charms, and a thousand beauties which want a name.

This, Madam, is part of her picture; but the description is not minute

enough to be worth your notice: for to say she was an admirable beauty, is saying very little to the purpose, since this was not the first idea that occurred on seeing her. We are struck with something more, which I must endeavour to describe.

Let us personate beauty, then; and suppose that, weary of being for ever charming, she endeavours to conceal the little graces that sport about her, and resolves to taste the calm satisfaction of barely pleasing; she tempers her beauty without losing it, and captivates still, though without design: such a one would exactly resemble Mrs. Dorcin; and this is the idea I would convey of this amiable lady.

But this is not all; I have here only mentioned her person: add to it a soul which sparkles in her countenance, and renders visible all its sensations; that spreads and diffuses over it the same spirit, delicacy, life, seriousness, gaiety, and mirth, which it by turns enjoys itself; and from hence judge of all the various accidents of force, of gracefulness, of delicacy, and all the rapid expressions that were visible in her countenance.

It is commonly thought, that our souls are more capacious or narrow, more penetrating, or confused and clouded, according to the configuration of the organs to which it is united; and, if this be true, nature must surely have given Mrs. Dorcin a most favourable organization; for never was a mind more active and sprightly, or more solid and judicious, than hers.

Most women of wit have an unnatural and affected way of expressing it, which renders it distasteful. One speaks in a careless indifferent manner, in order to make us think that her fine genius does not need the aid of reflection, and that all she says escapes her without thought; another speaks with a cold, grave, and decisive tone, to give herself an air of importance; another says only fine things, which she delivers in a manner finer still than all she says; and another will fall into a ridiculous gaiety, and act the flirt: but Mrs. Dorcin never behaved with any of these little womanish arts; the subject of her discourse regulated the tone of her voice; she did not think she had any kind of wit; but she had that

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source from which it necessarily proceeds; a pleasing vivacity, mixed with solidity and good sense, which was agreeably expressed according to the various exigences that required it; for her understanding was of no sex; it comprehended the strength, the solidity, the delicacy, the gaiety, of both.

Every one has a desire of pleasing; which, when kept within due bounds, is both just and natural: the fair are apt to indulge it too much, and to place great part of their happiness upon it. They too commonly make use of every trifling artifice to engage the attention; and every action says, 'Pray look at me.' But the amiable Mrs. Dorlin was a stranger to all these grimaces: she had a natural pride and self-complacence, which would not permit her to stoop to them, nor reap any advantage that might be drawn from them; but if ever she forgot herself in this point, none knew it but herself. In general, she had rather be thought sensible than charming: she

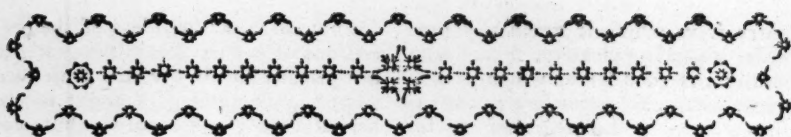
did not confound her ideas of the perfections of her mind with the graces of her person; for if her fine sense was admired, she always thought it was herself that you honoured; but you only complimented her form, when you said she was amiable.

Such were her sentiments: but, though she always experienced the highest satisfaction when her company seemed delighted with her conversation, yet she would have blushed had she given you room to think she used any arts to render her person admired; for she left to you the care of finding out her charms, without stooping to discover them herself.

But I am too much fatigued to proceed; besides, I grow sleepy: I am now to paint one of the best hearts in the world, though a very singular one; but I am not in a condition to undertake it at present; I shall therefore refer it to the Fifth Part; where I shall continue my life in the convent.

END OF THE FOURTH PART.

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THE  
VIRTUOUS ORPHAN.

PART V.



HERE, Madam, is the Fifth Part of my life: I have been so expeditious since you received the Fourth, that I begin to think I may boast, with a good grace, of my diligence; but as this would be giving myself airs, which, perhaps, I should very ill support, I think it becomes me more modestly to decline the merit of it. You have thought me very lazy; and not without reason: continue to think so still; and then, if I should happen to be expeditious, (if you do not flatter me) you will be agreeably surprized.

You remember that my benefactress, Valville, and I, dined at Mrs. Dorfin's, and that I was attempting to draw her picture, but left it unfinished. I shall now go on with it.

I have already given you a description of her person and wit; I now come to the dispositions of her heart. Mrs. De Valville you thought extremely amiable; but Mrs. Dorfin's soul, as I have already informed you, was not at all inferior to hers, though, in many respects, widely different from it: but, for fear you should not readily understand wherein this difference consists, you will permit me to begin by a reflection.

You may remember I painted Mrs. De Valville as a person of a great deal of natural sweetness, united to a good share of intelligence and plain sense; but her wit, though far from being despicable, had nothing in it shining and remarkable enough to attract our admiration and applause: but I am

now speaking of a lady who possessed the most sparkling wit, and the most perfect delicacy of sentiment.

Let us suppose the most generous and best person in the world, with the most refined soul, and the most penetrating wit; I believe this person would not appear so charmingly beneficent as another of exactly the same dispositions, but a more moderate share of those other accomplishments: the reason is, we are apt to attribute to her good sense those actions which spring from the heart.

Most men, when they receive an obligation, would have the author of it insensible of the greatness of the favour conferred: such a disposition flatters their ingratitude, and soothes that unnatural delicacy which makes the sense of being obliged painful to the mind. Persons of this disposition would have a benefactor good, without sufficiently knowing the value and extent of that goodness. The more penetration he has, the more they are humbled: he sees too clearly for them. The mind, full of it's self-sufficiency, is elated, and would fain enjoy an independency unknown to nature and reason: and, though every order of mankind, from the highest to the lowest, like an up-lifted chain, have a necessary dependence on each other, yet they blush at the thought of being obliged. Here they are afraid of appearing ungrateful, because they are sensible that the least degree of it will be taken notice of: but, in the other case, having nothing to fear, the pleasure of receiving is doubled, and the delight of an acknowledg-

acknowledgment is almost equal to that calm and sweet satisfaction which accompanies generosity.

The one knows that she has been of service to you; but she enters not minutely enough into her favours, and half of her goodness escapes her own notice; and, as she takes away from your acknowledgment, she proportionably spares your confusion: and this so charms the receiver, that he thinks her a thousand times more obliging than the other; though she has no other additional merit than the having one qualification less.

Such were the characters of these engaging ladies. Here I hoped to end my reflection; but another thought occurs, which I must add to render it complete. I hope you will excuse me, and think it needs no apology.

From whence comes it that almost all men are guilty of this preposterous kind of delicacy? Must we derive it's source from the real grandeur of our souls? Is it an indignity to be obliged to stoop to any of our own species? or is the title of Benefactor fit for the Deity alone? This is far from being the case. We are full of mutual wants, and have a natural dependence on each other, which calls for reciprocal acts of kindness and compassion: we are formed with a tender sense of the sufferings of others, which so strongly prompts us to acts of beneficence, that we cannot refrain from relieving a worthy object without a considerable deal of pain and self-denial. This is the settled constitution of nature, which we can never be able to alter: let us act, then, conformably to the situation in which we are placed; and, if it is true that we have any real innate dignity of soul, let us draw from our present station a rule of action worthy of ourselves.

Your say, he that obliges you has an advantage over you; would you preserve this superiority, be ungrateful, and you are only an atom in comparison to him; but would you become his equal, you have nothing to do but to indulge a grateful sense of the favours you receive: this is your best revenge. If he grows proud and assuming upon the favours he has conferred, humble him in your turn, and place yourself modestly above him by your acknowledgments: I say modestly; for if your gratitude has the least tincture of vain-

glory and ostentation, the least appearance of an uneasy desire of humbling him, you miss your aim, and you only resemble two pigmies, disputing which is the least.

I have now done, Madam: I beg pardon for being so tedious; and return to Mrs. Dorfin. As you were so pleased with the picture which I have drawn of my benefactress, I thought my reflections here would not be misplaced, to prevent your reading with prejudice a description of another person, who possessed the same benevolence, with a mind much superior; a circumstance which, I have already observed, is a disadvantage to her good temper; and in order to shew in what manner her extraordinary wit and fine sense will necessarily constitute a considerable difference in the apparent value of their good actions.

Mrs. De Valville, with all her stock of goodness, did generally no more for you than what you barely sought for; and rendered you precisely the favours you dared to ask: I say dared, because we have seldom the courage fully to expose our necessities; for we commonly act in these cases with a reserve which prevents our setting them in a true light. Thus your timorousness would be of dis-service to you before Mrs. De Valville; for she would search no farther into your circumstances than you desired to have her: her acts of beneficence were conducted according to her conception of your wants; and the bounds of her understanding were the bounds of her goodness.

With Mrs. Dorfin it was quite the reverse; she penetrated into whatever you durst not discover: this disposition at once warmed and instructed her heart, and instantly inspired her with that degree of goodness which was suitable to your necessities; nay, she was apt to imagine your wants to be greater than you yourself thought them; and consequently conferred more favours on you than you would ever have asked; for her attention, wit, and penetration, were all employed to serve you.

She never appeared weary of this delightful employment; it was never her that was fatigued; but rather she, out of an excess of concern for your happiness, that teased you: she would press you to open your mind with the greatest freedom;

freedom; inform you of something to your advantage, which perhaps never would have occurred to your thoughts; remind you of something else; and, with an air of sweetness, chide you for what you had forgot. In short, your business instantly became hers; and her tender concern so interested her in your affairs, that her generosity seemed to subside, as if her care had sprung from something selfish and mercenary, and you was almost in danger of thinking her zeal for your interest troublesome.

Instead of one piece of service that you would have thought this charming lady had conferred, you oftentimes would find yourself surrounded with obligations, and surprized to find yourself indebted to her for favours that you could not have foreseen; and that, in the same affair, she had provided for the future as well as for the present. She saw every thing, and made use of the minutest occasion to assist you: she became every day more serviceable, and thought herself under a necessity of increasing her kindness and condescension in proportion as she obliged you.

Many persons, when they confer an act of beneficence, set an excessive value upon it, grow vain-glorious, and say to themselves—'Sure he must be extremely grateful; for I have been of particular service to him!'

Mrs. Dorfin, on the contrary, would say—'I have served him often, and have thereby accustomed him to believe that I shall be always ready to do so; I must not, therefore, lose this good opinion which he has entertained, and which is so agreeable to me, but must keep it alive by a continual endeavour to deserve it.'

Thus she acted as if she had been the obliged, and you had merited her acknowledgments: because she had served you once, she thought she always ought to do it; and this conclusion was accompanied with such an exquisite pleasure, as sufficiently recompensed all her favours.

Your boldness in renewing your requests was to her a kind of obligation; her sublime self-love knew no delight equal to such a confidence in her goodness; and the oftener you gave her the satisfaction of acting like herself, the more you charmed her, the more you treated her according to her wishes. How amiable, how divinely charming,

do such dispositions render us! what an honour are they to human nature! and how nearly do they make us resemble superior intelligences, both in the rectitude of our natures and the purity of our pleasures!

A mind which desires no greater reward for dissipating anxiety and care, and diffusing over the soul joy and tranquillity, but the sublime delight of preserving this harmonious disposition of the passions, and of sympathizing in those sweet satisfactions which it has spread through the grateful heart; a mind, I say, of this noble disposition, of this elevated dignity, tastes the sweetest and most refined delights that can swell the human breast. But to proceed.

Persons of wit seldom know how to accommodate themselves to those who want it, or who have less than themselves; they are at a loss, and do not know what to say in such a conversation: but Mrs. Dorfin, who had much more than many who are allowed to have a great deal, did not even think of taking notice whether any in company had it or not; she did not expect they should have more than nature and improvement had given them; and she herself then seemed to have no more than they. Mrs. Dorfin did not, out of an affected complaisance, stoop to bring herself upon a level with others; and, though she condescended at all times, and upon every occasion, she had no other merit in it than in being born with a mind naturally of a sensible and philosophick cast, which would not permit her to relish the ridiculous pleasure of despising another's wit; and which never made use of it's own capacity in searching the extent of yours, but only in bringing itself down insensibly to it.

Mrs. Dorfin did not at all reflect that she condescended to stoop to you, nor could you think that she did; yet you would always find that she gave life to the conversation, diffused cheerfulness and good-humour around her, and inspired with wit and vivacity those persons who, in other company, seemed most to want those amiable qualifications.

On the other hand, persons of the finest genius were ambitious of appearing in the most engaging light before her; not because they thought it necessary to shine in order to secure her esteem;



esteem; but, charmed with her fine sense, and the delicacy of her sentiments, they thought it an honour which the world would take notice of, to be able to attract a peculiar regard from her, and to gain her approbation.

The ladies, too, exerted themselves before her; not to try the extent of her wit, for that they were sufficiently acquainted with, but to make her a witness of theirs: while she gave them a full liberty of displaying their talents; and seldom interrupted them, but to give that praise which she so well knew how to bestow. Her discourse at once improved and delighted the mind, inspired with confidence the diffident and timorous, and made all her company, how various soever their dispositions were, both easy to themselves and agreeable to each other.

But how peculiar to great minds is this pleasing affability! Go into what house you please, where there are persons of various abilities and employments; suppose you, at the same time, find there a soldier, a courtier, a lawyer, an ecclesiastick, a professor of the sciences, and a man of letters; and, while these are only masters of their particular professions, let them remain ever so long together, they maintain their characters distinctly, would never be united, and are as perfect strangers to each other as if they were all of a different nation, and separately speak a different language: and, thus ill-placed, they are a kind of spectacle to each other. You find a troublesome and ridiculous kind of subordination amongst them, which the pride and arrogance of some, and the timidity of others, create and maintain: one bluntly interrogates the rest; another assumes a pedantick and affected gravity; and a third modestly waits till he is spoke to. This person is for deciding every thing, though he knows not what he says; and that, though he is in the right, dares not speak his sentiments: they none of them lose sight of what they are; but all adjust their discourse and countenances to their respective circumstances. What a miserable and painful discord!

At Mrs. Dorfin's there was nothing like this to be seen; for she had the secret of curing persons of this unsociable disposition: ranks and circumstances were there instantly forgot; nor was it remembered whether they were persons

of great or small importance. It was men conversing with men amongst whom the best arguments only could prevail: like superior spirits of an equal dignity, though of different capacities, all united in a free conversation; they are regardless of the titles chance had formerly given them here below; and are sensible that those fortuitous events which here distinguished them, ought not to puff up the one, nor humble the other. Thus it was at Mrs. Dorfin's; where all were inspired with a reasonable and philosophick way of thinking.

But yet, on the other hand, she did not refuse to conform to popular prejudices, and voluntarily complied with some things which the vanity of mankind had introduced; for she took care to cultivate an acquaintance and friendship with the great and powerful. This, she thought, policy demanded; and it would be, therefore, imprudent to neglect it, since they would contribute to support you in the high opinion of others.

I told you that, perhaps, I should be very long in this character; you see, Madam, I have kept my word. I will mention only one article more before I have done with it: I must omit a great many particulars, lest you should think me tedious. A general character may be drawn in a few words; but an exact enumeration of particulars has no end. To proceed, then, to the last article.

This most amiable lady, to this excellent heart, and distinguished sense, had farther a great, courageous, and resolute mind; a soul superior to all events, and whose dignity would not suffer it to bend or be depressed under any human accident; that found it's resources where others would have been most at a loss; that might be afflicted, but never cast down, never involved in inextricable perplexities. We admired her behaviour more in her afflictions than we thought of lamenting her: she always preserved, in the midst of the greatest troubles, a countenance grave and serene; and a decent gaiety amidst the greatest subjects of joy. I have seen her in both these circumstances, and never could find that they deprived her of her presence of mind, the sweetness of her manners, or the tranquillity of her conversation with her friends; for she was entirely yours, though she

had reason to have all her thoughts wholly employed about herself: and I have sometimes been so surprized at this, that, notwithstanding my tenderness for her, I could not help letting my affection give way to my admiration.

I have seen her in a long and dangerous illness, in which she seemed to languish under the remedies applied for her relief; when, though her paleness sufficiently told her disorder, her countenance was so composed and serene, that you would not have discovered it by her looks or behaviour. If you enquired how she did, she would only say that she was ill; if you did not ask her, she would talk to you about your own affairs, or calmly bear a part in the conversation.

Her servants adored her; they thought their interest inseparable from hers: whatever she lost, the loss was equally theirs; and, for the same reason, their attachment to her made them regard her riches as their own. When she was afflicted, they were so too; and when she rejoiced, they sympathized also in her satisfaction. By this you may judge how dear she was to them; and how engaging must be her behaviour, thus to enchant and tame persons, whom a grovelling education too commonly renders selfish and mercenary; and to inspire with friendship a set of persons, the best of whom can hardly prevail upon themselves to pardon the servitude we require, the ease and indolence we enjoy, and the faults they do not fail to observe in our conduct.

Mrs. Dorlin was extremely generous; but the œconomy of her servants repaired the effects of that goodness, which she often exerted without bounds.

But where will this subject carry me? I fear you are displeased with my prolixity: remember, Madam, it is a delightful employment to do justice to those we love; but I sincerely beg pardon for indulging this pleasure at the expence of your patience.

Where did I break off? I remember I was at Mrs. Dorlin's. I suppress her cares, and the obliging manner in which she entertained me; as well as all those gallant and agreeable things the gentlemen expressed who dined with us.

At last, some new company coming in, my benefactress took that opportu-

nity to retire: Valville and I followed her; and her friend waited upon us to embrace me; when, after compliments on both sides, we departed for the convent; whither Mrs. De Valville waited upon me.

All this while I have made no mention of Valville: he continually fixed his eyes upon me, which I sometimes returned with a tender look, as if by stealth. Whilst the discourse was directed to me, he seemed thoughtful, as if in pain for my answer; and then looked on the rest, to see if they were pleased with my sentiments; which happened pretty often: and, though their compliments proceeded from their goodness, I could not help flattering myself that there was some justice in them. I confess that, at first, I was out of countenance, and my discourse sufficiently proved it; but this presently wore off; and I acted my part very well afterwards, even in the opinion of Mrs. De Valville; who, as we were in the coach, said merrily—'Well, child, does the company we have been in please you? It appears to me that you were very agreeable to them: we shall make something of you in time.'—'Aye, aye,' said Valville, in the same tone; 'there is room to hope that Miss Marianne will render herself agreeable to them one time or other.'—'I do not know what may happen,' answered I, laughing; 'but, if I do not, it shall never be for want of endeavours on my side.—It is you, Madam, must take care you do not repent chusing me for a daughter.' We entertained each other with this kind of raillery till we came to the convent.

'Will it be long before we shall see her again?' said Valville to my benefactress, as he presented me his hand to help me out of the coach. 'I believe not,' returned she: 'we may perhaps dine once more at Mrs. Dorlin's, as she seemed pleased with our company; but do not be impatient. Come, hand Marianne in.'

On this he rung the bell; the door opened; and Valville had only time to say, with a sigh—'You are now, my charmer, going to shut yourself up; and in a moment I shall be a recluse too; though, in the midst of the busy world, it is you alone will employ my thoughts.'—'What is the world to me?' returned I. 'I know none but

'but you and my dear mother! nor do I desire to know any other.'

He appeared moved at this discourse; and, whilst they were opening the door, had the dexterity to press my hand to his lips without being discovered by Mrs. De Valville, who waited for him in her coach; at least, he believed she did not see him, because he was not willing she should do so: and I reasoned much after the same manner. Mean time I drew back my hand, but not till he had done with it; for we are always too late in such cases.

In fine, I went in with a mind gay and thoughtful, and he retired. I fancied that those who are left behind on these occasions are more uneasy than they who leave them. His going, I thought, would divert and dissipate the pain of parting; and even the motion of his body, as well as the objects around, would help to recreate him; whilst I, on the contrary, had every thing around me that would indulge a gloomy, pensive disposition; especially as this retreat was a convent, a place from whence love is banished, and where every thing that passes is so foreign to the tender dispositions of the heart; and a cloister renders such separations more serious and affecting than any other place.

On the other hand, I had great reason for gaiety and consolation: since Valville loved me, and was permitted to do it, I risked nothing in returning his passion; and we seemed destined for each other. What an agreeable subject of contemplation! Besides, Mrs. De Valville's behaviour to me, as well as the rest of her conduct, had informed me that I had nothing to do but to preserve my patience, and take courage.

Valville was no sooner gone than I went up into my chamber; where I began to undress me, and put on my dishabille, against supper-time; but, on second thoughts, I deferred it till I had been at the refectory.

Amongst the boarders there was one pretty near my own age, and who was agreeable enough to make her think herself a great beauty; but her high value for her dear person rendered her whole conduct ridiculous. Nothing was the object of her contemplation but her own face; the charms of which were the subject of every reflection: she

was never weary of this idea; and all her actions discovered a mind extremely vain, and full of the most consummate affectation. Whenever she looked at any body, she did it only to shew her large eyes; which she rendered fierce or soft according to her desire either to command respect or to please. But she seldom put on these looks of mildness; for she was more fond of commanding than appearing with a graceful tenderness; because she was a lady of quality, and therefore expected a great deference should be paid her.

You remember, Madam, the discourse I had with the abbess, when I presented myself to her before Mrs. De Valville; and I then mentioned the misfortunes of my life, and that my benefactress was so touched with them, that she forgot to desire her to keep them secret when she took me under her care, and placed me with her; for few people attend to every thing at once. I, however, had thought of it within two hours after I had entered her house, and most humbly entreated her not to divulge what I had told her. 'Alas, my dear child!' cried she, 'I shall be very far from it; fear nothing: do you think I do not know the consequence of such things?' But whether I was then too late with my request, or that desiring her to say nothing had rendered my secret burdensome to her, and more difficult to keep, and had only served to heighten the temptation to discover it, it was scarcely nine o'clock the next day before I was the common talk, and my history had run through the whole convent. I observed every where the nuns whispering to each other, and rudely staring at me wherever I went. I soon knew the cause; but, unable to help myself, I cast down my eyes, and seemed to take no notice of it. However, there was hardly one amongst them that did not express a great deal of friendship for me by their caresses, which I think at first they did out of a curiosity of hearing me speak. A girl like me, when she enters a convent, is at first a kind of spectacle; and the whole discourse, for some time, consists of such impertinent questions as these—'Is she tall? Is she little? What sort of an air has she? What does she say? How is she dressed? Is she handsome?' In short, to this inquisitive disposition, nothing that she has



has appears insignificant, nor too trifling not to engage their attention. This extravagant curiosity commonly terminates in their conceiving a higher opinion of her if she is amiable, or a much worse if she is not so, than she really deserves; and this is the common effect of those dispositions which prompt us to look upon persons of whom we are told extraordinary things.

However, I soon found their curiosity was of the greatest service to me. All the nuns loved me; but never told me what they had learned of my misfortunes: but their commendations of my person, and that air of sweetness and modesty they complimented me with, were uttered with such a lamentable tone, that you would have thought they were weeping over me. This was the effect of that knowledge which they, out of tenderness to me, were not willing to discover any other way; but which was as intelligible as if they had said—'Poor little orphan, how deplorable is your situation, thus to be reduced to live on the charity of others!'

But let me proceed to what makes me here mention these particulars. This young boarder, so puffed up with her own charms, was the only person who treated me with contempt; and who had not, indeed, condescended to speak to me. Scarce could she resolve to return, with a slight inclination of her head, the low curtsies which I constantly made her whenever we met; and it was easily seen that even this was attended with reluctance.

One day, as she was taking a turn in the garden with some of our companions, I happened to pass by her, as I was talking with a nun; when, casting a negligent look at me, I heard her say, with the tone and air of a princess—'Yes, the thing is genteel enough: it is a lady, I think, who has the charity to pay her board. Do not you think she resembles my Jenny?' This was a servant she had to wait upon her; and who, indeed, favoured me a little, but in a bad likeness. I observed that those that were with her made her no answer; whilst I blushed very much, and the tears came into my eyes. The nun with whom I was walking was a lady of admirable good sense, and had conceived a particular regard for me, which I returned with an un-

dissembled friendship; she shook her head at this speech, and said nothing.

I could not forbear saying, with a sigh—'Oh, how cruel, how barbarously cruel, are some persons!' For it would have been to no purpose to conceal my uneasiness, since I found every one in the house was acquainted with my circumstances.

'Do not mind her, Miss,' said the nun, taking hold of my hand with a look of friendship; 'you have advantages which greatly revenge you of this haughty, impertinent creature: you would have greater reason to be vain than she, though you had not had more sense, and a better understanding, to set you above her. Do not envy her any of the advantages she enjoys; for, indeed, it is she only that has reason to be jealous.'

'You are very obliging, mother,' returned I, with a look of acknowledgment. 'Alas! you speak of my having sense and understanding; I should be far from blushing at my misfortunes if every body had as much sense and understanding as you.'

This treatment I was exposed to from this haughty lady, who could not forgive my being, perhaps, as handsome as herself. However, I went into the refectory, dressed as I was, and even glad that I was so, that I might have an opportunity of disconcerting my jealous rival, of whom I chanced to think as I was going thither; and who would, I thought, make a comparison between her form and mine, that would contribute more than a little to her mortification; for there were but two or three in the house that had ever seen me completely dressed before, and they but once.

I have already told you that I was not hated in the convent; my friendly and engaging behaviour had drawn upon me the good-will of every body, except the lady just mentioned, and made them love to praise and do me justice. I had no sooner entered, than the eyes of every one were fixed upon me: they expressed a general surprize; which was very agreeable, as it seemed attended with an air of pleasure and friendship. They, from time to time, regarded my rival, to examine the mien she assumed on this occasion, and to see if her looks did not confess that she thought



thought herself out-done; for they had taken notice of her jealousy.

She had no sooner seen me, than I observed she smiled with an air of contempt, and held down her head; a behaviour she probably thought most proper to support her cause, and maintain her vanity.

When supper was over, all the boarders went into the garden, and I amongst the rest: we were followed by some of the nuns, amongst whom was one I have already mentioned under the character of my friend. We were no sooner there, but my companions came up to me. One asked where I had been; that she had not seen me to-day; another took notice of my gown, and admired it's beauty; while another seemed delighted with the fineness of my head-dress, and observed that it became me extremely. I had many remarks made upon these trifles, which were expressed with a great deal of good nature. Mean while, my friend the nun came up to us; and maliciously addressing herself to the lady that looked upon me with such contempt—'Is it not true, Miss,' said she, 'that this would be a lovely victim to offer up to Heaven? What a fine sacrifice would it be if this charming young lady should renounce the world, and become a nun?'

'Lard, mother! the creature is well enough,' returned she: 'for my part, I believe it is her design; I think it is the best step such as she can take!' Then turning to me, 'Marianne,' continued she, 'your gown is mighty fine, and every thing, I think, is answerable to it. Was you ever so fine before? Why, it must cost a good deal of money! The lady that takes care of you is mighty generous! What age is she of? Is she old? Does she think of securing to you something to live on? for she cannot live for ever; and it would be a pity should she not put you in a condition to be always as well dressed: one is soon used to it; and I advise you to tell her so.'

The general silence which this discourse occasioned, and which, in part, proceeded from the astonishment it had cast the young ladies into, disconcerted me extremely. I remained speechless and confused at seeing the amazement the others were in; and could not help

shedding some tears before I was able to answer her.

During my silence, the nun replied to her sharply—'What do you mean, Madam, by this fine discourse? What business have you to interfere in this lady's concerns? I find I must inform you, that your assuming behaviour humbles nobody here but yourself. We are not ignorant, Miss, of the base motive of those haughty airs you give yourself. My lady, your mother, when she placed you here, informed us that an insufferable pride was your favourite vice; warned us of the effects of it; and entreated us, if possible, to cure you of it; and, I will assure you, my endeavours shall not be wanting for that purpose: and I desire, when you speak to Miss, that, for the future, you call her no more Marianne, as you have just done, since she always uses you with respect; and there is none but you amongst us who take the liberty to use her otherwise. You have no right to dispense with the obligations of that decency and politeness which ought always to be observed amongst us.—But what reason have you, Miss, to be afflicted?' continued she, looking at me with compassion and friendship in her eyes. 'Why do you weep? Is there any thing to be ashamed of in the misfortunes that have stripped you of your parents? It must be a very base and wicked mind that could take occasion from the calamities of others, (to which we are all liable) to use us ill; especially one like you, so well born, and so genteelly educated: for, if we may judge of the condition of people from the opinion their behaviour inspires, this lady here, who thinks herself so much your superior, would not degrade herself at all by looking upon you at least as her equal as to birth, and would be extremely happy if she was so with regard to your amiable character.'

'No, mother!' returned I, with a mixture of kindness and trouble in my looks; 'I have nothing; God has taken every thing from me: and I ought to believe myself the lowest of mankind. But I had much rather be as I am, than to have all those advantages Miss has above me, and be capable

'pable of insulting the afflicted.' This discourse, and the tears that were mingled with it, touched the hearts of all my companions, and made them interest themselves in my uneasiness.

'Lard! who thought of insulting her!' cried the young jealous lady, blushing with shame and spite. 'What hurt is there, pray, in advising her to take care of herself? There needs a mighty deal of ceremony to be used with such as she!'

Nobody made any answer to this. My friend the nun had already turned her back, and drew to our side the greatest number of the boarders, who followed us; while only two or three staid with my enemy, amongst whom one was her relation, and another her friend.

This little adventure, which I thought might be instructive to those young ladies to whom you may give this to read, caused me to redouble my modesty and politeness to my companions; who, in their turn, increased their friendship for me. But let me proceed with my history.

Mrs. De Valville came to see me the third day after our dining with Mrs. Dorfin; and some days after this, I received, at nine in the morning, a second note, which desired me to get ready by one o'clock, to pay a second visit at Mrs. Dorfin's, with a new order to dress myself; which was followed with a perfect obedience. At the time appointed, I was told she waited for me: it was eight days since I had seen Valville; and I confess that I thought it very long. I hoped to find him at the gate of the convent as I had done the first time; I did not at all question his being there: but I was mistaken. Mrs. De Valville had prudently judged it proper to leave him behind her, and I was only received by a footman, who conducted me to her coach. I was immediately stunned; my gaiety left me in a moment. I dissembled, however; and advanced, secretly discouraged, though I would willingly have concealed it from my benefactress: but my face was not made to dissemble; my mien betrayed me; she perceived my trouble in my countenance; for, in spite of my endeavours to hide it, I approached her with such a disordered air, that she could not help smiling as soon as she saw me. This smile a little re-

vived my courage, for I thought it a good sign. 'Come in, child,' said she. I placed myself; and we drove away.

'There wants somebody here,' cried she, laughing; 'does not there?'—'Who is that, Madam?' said I, seeming to know nothing of the matter. 'Who, child!' replied she. 'Sure you know better than I, though I am his mother!'—'O it is Mr. De Valville!' returned I: 'but I thought we should find him at Mrs. Dorfin's.'—'No, no,' said she; 'it is better than that: he waits for us at one of his friends, from whence we shall take him in our way; I was not willing to bring him here; but you shall see him by-and-by.'

In short, we soon stopped: I had perceived a lacquey, at a distance, standing at a gentleman's door, and had observed that he disappeared in an instant, and was run, without doubt, to inform his master, who had probably ordered him to wait for us; and who, indeed, was coming to us as soon as we arrived. How sweet is the pleasure when, after a painful absence, we see one we love! How delightful is it to find the dear agreeable object again! I at once thought, at seeing him at the door, that he had taken some measures to hasten his seeing me a minute or two; and how valuable is a minute, how vastly precious, to those that love! and how pleased was my heart to think he had taken care to forward our mutual joy, by that single minute!

'What! my son here already!' cried Mrs. De Valville: 'you are willing to improve every moment.'—'See what it is to have a mother,' returned he, in the same tone, 'whose tenderness makes her divine all that passes in our hearts.'—'Hold your tongue,' said she, smiling; 'suppress this sort of language: let your tender discourses alone, if you please, till I am gone.'—'You cast down your eyes,' added she, addressing herself to me; 'I shall teach you better manners: I saw you turn pale, Miss, because he was not with me; your mother's company was not enough for you.'

'O Madam! do not be displeased with her,' returned Valville, casting a glance at me full of tenderness. 'Would it be agreeable to you, that she should be insensible of the ab-

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‘sence of a man to whom you intend to marry her? If you will turn away your head, Madam, I have a great desire to kiss her hand, to thank her for it.’ Here he seized my hand, but I snatched it from him hastily; at the same time hitting him a tap over the fingers: and immediately taking hold of my benefactress’s hand, I kissed it with an emotion expressive of the greatest delight and affection. ‘O ye little hypocrite!’ returned she, squeezing mine, ‘you both abuse the respect you owe me: come, be quiet; let us talk of other things.—Have you seen my brother, son? How did he do this morning?’—‘A little better, Madam,’ returned he; ‘but continues sleepy, as he was yesterday.’—‘This drowsiness disturbs me,’ said Mrs. De Valville; ‘we must not stay so long as we did the other day: I must go betimes to see my brother.’

We were at this part of our discourse, when the coach stopped at Mrs. Dorfin’s: we found very good company there, for it was the same I had seen before, with the addition of two others, who did not appear superfluous, and whose obliging behaviour, and curious way of looking at me, seemed to say that they waited to see me, and had been entertained with some discourse to my advantage.

We dined; and they made me talk more than I had done the time before: Mrs. Dorfin, according to custom, loaded me with caresses. But you will dispense with a detail of what passed, and let me proceed.

About an hour after we were risen from table, Mrs. De Valville was told that one of her servants wanted to speak to her: it was to tell her that Mr. De Climal was in danger; and that they were endeavouring to bring him out of an apoplestic fit, into which he had fallen two hours before.

She entered the room in a terrible fright; and, with the tears in her eyes, told us this melancholy news, took leave of the company, left me at the convent, and hastened to visit the sick gentleman with Valville, who appeared touched with the condition of his uncle; as well as uneasy at the hasty and abrupt manner in which he was snatched from the pleasure he seemed to enjoy in my company. I was even more

disturbed than he, which I let him see by my looks; and I went quite melancholy to shut up myself in my chamber, where I indulged, and gave myself up to the most gloomy reflections.

‘If Mr. De Climal dies now,’ said I to myself, ‘Valville, who is already rich, will be still much more so; and oh! how do I know but this new acquisition of wealth may be of prejudice to me! Is it possible that the heir to such an immense fortune should marry me? Will it not make Mrs. De Valville herself disown that surprising and almost incredible goodness she has shewn in approving our love? Will she resign her son, that may now make the greatest alliances, and dignify his family with honours and titles? Will not this be a temptation to her?’ Sure here was sufficient room to be alarmed!

A moment after, I reasoned thus—‘Valville, I am sure, has a great deal of tenderness for me; his affection has made him refuse all the advantages that might result from his marrying one of his equals: but will it fortify him against the ambition of making an alliance with a family much greater, and more powerful, than his own? Will he resist the allurements of honour, and the noble employments that they may procure him? Will his love be proof against all this? There are degrees of generosity superior to the reach of the most generous minds: hearts capable of sustaining themselves under such trying proofs are so very rare, that it is almost too much to hope meeting with one sufficiently courageous to bear them; and that mind must be looked upon as deserving the epithet of great, that cannot be overcome by any temptation beneath the greatest.’

I had, however, no reason to fear on this account; for it was not ambition that could rob me of the heart of my dear Valville: yet, nevertheless, I was extremely disturbed, and my inquietude deprived me of all repose.

I was going to arise the next day, when I saw a nun enter my chamber, who told me that the abbess desired me to dress as quick as possible; and that this was the result of a letter she had just received from Mrs. De Valville;

in which she desired her to permit me to go immediately. 'And there is even,' added she, 'a coach waiting for you in the court.'

This was another subject of perplexity; my heart beat, and my mind was filled with the most uneasy perturbations. 'Send for me so early!' said I to myself. 'Oh! what has happened? What does she threaten me with? I have no other resource here than the protection of Mrs. De Valville,' (for I durst not then call her mother;) and will she take that away? Am I going to lose her? One can be sure of nothing in such circumstances as mine: nobody is obliged to support me; my whole reliance is upon a generous lady, who may, when she pleases, withhold her favours, and abandon me to misery, without giving me cause to complain of her; and, to effect this, she need only listen to the ill report of a hypocrite; this alone might sufficiently disgust and enrage her against me.' These thoughts I revolved in my mind whilst I was dressing myself. The unhappy easily conceive an ill opinion of their condition, because they put little trust in the blessings which offer themselves.

In fine, I was soon ready; I went out dressed very negligently, and stepped into the coach; I imagined they were carrying me to Mrs. De Valville's, but I was quite mistaken; the coach stopped at Mr. De Climal's. I at first knew the house again; for you know it was not very long since I was there: but judge what was my surprize! I at once thought all were lost. 'Now I see what is done,' said I to myself; 'I see that I am ruined: this wicked man has recovered, and will revenge himself. I expect to be loaded with a thousand calumnies that he has invented against me: he will give every thing what turn he pleases; he passes for a good man; and, in spite of all my efforts to vindicate myself, and make my innocence appear, he will impose upon my benefactress, and make her believe all his horrid falsehoods. Oh, my God! how wicked is this abandoned wretch!'

And, indeed, there was reason to fear what I apprehended: the menaces he gave me, when I left Mrs. Du Tour; the scene that passed between us before

the monk, to whom I had been to make my complaints, and before whom I had been obliged to vindicate myself against whatever the most villainous and intrepid hypocrisy could suggest to his advantage and my prejudice; the marks of friendship Mrs. De Valville had expressed, when he saw her salute me at a distance; the fear that I should reveal, or had already revealed, his baseness to that lady, to whom he was sensible I was known; all this added to my being obliged to go to him, without being previously acquainted with the visit I was to make, which had the appearance of something sinister in it, was enough to make me imagine that I was going to suffer some new affronts, and receive fresh cause of inquietude from him.

'Who knows but he may say that it was I who tempted him, in order to engage him to serve me?' said I. But this account would be very different from that he told Father St. Vincent; he there only accused me of being willing to believe that he loved me; and this good monk, who heard us both, will not, sure, refuse his testimony to a poor creature unjustly loaded with such black calumnies! Thus I reasoned; when I saw myself in the court of Mr. De Climal's house; and stepped out of the coach in a fit of trembling suited to the dreadful scene for which I was preparing myself.

As I entered the hall, I observed two stair-cases; and asked a footman which I was to ascend: he told me that on the right-hand, down which I instantly saw Valville coming to meet me with precipitation.

Astonished to see him there, I stopped, without knowing what I did, and endeavoured to examine his mien, and with what air he regarded me: he appeared sad and dejected, but in a manner that intimated nothing against me; and he addressed me with the most tender air. 'Come, Miss,' said he, with a look all love and softness; and, taking me by the hand—'Come, my dear, no time is to be lost; my uncle is dying, and desires first to speak with you.'—'Me, Sir!' returned I, breathing more freely, for the manner of his speaking to me had revived and given me courage, and made his dying



ing uncle appear less dangerous. I could not think it probable that a man would fill up his last moments with guilt.

'Me, Sir!' cried I again. 'What does he wait for me for? What would he have with me?'—'We do not know that,' returned he; 'but this morning he asked my mother, if she was particularly acquainted with the young woman that she saluted in the convent some days ago? My mother replied, that she was; and even told him, in few words, in what manner you became a boarder in the convent, without concealing that it was she who placed you there. Upon this,—"You can prevail with her, then, to come here," answered he; "and I desire she may be sent for; I must see her, for I have something to say to her before I die;" and my mother, in answer to his request, wrote to the abbess, to permit you to come. This, Miss, is all I am able to tell you.'

'Alas!' returned I, 'his desire of seeing me has very much disturbed me; I imagined that he had some ill intention against me.'—'You were mistaken,' replied he; 'he appears, at least, to have dispositions very far from it.' This passed as we were going up stairs. 'My mother,' added he, 'desired me to inform you of this before you saw Mr. De Climal.'

Here we were at the chamber-door: I have already told you I began to take courage; but the sight of his chamber, into which I was going to enter, made me relapse into my former uneasiness. It was a strange visit I was going to pay; and there were a variety of little reasons that contributed to render it painful.

How very disagreeable was it to me to appear before a man who, in my opinion, could not help being humbled at seeing me! His age, his hypocrisy, and the base means he made use of to delude my youth and innocent simplicity, would contribute to confound and abash him in the agonies of death: and, though expiring, he must be confused at the thought of seeing me, whom he was going to leave a living witness of his infamy.

The first person I saw was Father St. Vincent, sitting at his pillow; and next

him sat Mrs. De Valville, with her back towards me.

At the sight of this monk, whom I surprized, at least as much as he did me, my inquietudes returned; I feared that our meeting there presaged no good, and that there was too much reason for all my former suspicions.

He, on his side, had not learned the name of my benefactress, and Mr. De Climal had said nothing to him of this project; he therefore did not know what to think on seeing me in the midst of this gentleman's family, introduced by Valville, whom he saw enter with me; and who, out of regard to his uncle, kept a respectful distance, as not being willing to let him know that we entered together.

At the noise we made when coming in—"Who is that?" cried Mr. De Climal. 'It is the young person, brother, that you desired to see,' said Mrs. De Valville. 'Come near, Marianne,' added she immediately.

This discourse made me tremble from head to foot: I came near, however, with my eyes cast down; I durst not lift them upon this dying man, and was at a loss to know how to do it.

'Ah, Miss! is it you then?' said he, with a feeble and troubled voice: 'I am obliged to you for coming; pray sit down.' I took a chair, still silent, with down-cast looks, and had yet seen only the bed; but, a moment after, I lifted up my eyes a little higher, then higher still, till at last I saw half his face, and soon after saw it entire; but this was only for an instant; for I was afraid he would take notice of my observing him, which might throw him into some confusion, and mortify him too much: but this is certain, I observed not the least appearance of malice in his countenance.

'Where is my nephew?' said Mr. De Climal. 'I am here, Sir,' returned Valville, who modestly advanced to shew himself. 'Stay here,' said he—"And you, father," added he, addressing himself to the monk, 'do you be so kind as to stay.' But not mentioning Mrs. De Valville, who took notice of the exception his silence made to her, said to him—"Brother, I am going to give some orders;" and immediately retired into another chamber. 'As you please, sister,' returned he,

as he went out. This retreat, which Mr. De Climal seemed to wish for, contributed to prove that I had nothing dreadful to fear; for, if he had resolved to say any thing to my prejudice, he would have detained my benefactress, whose presence would have been necessary to such a scene: and my mind was only filled with an extreme curiosity to know in what all this ceremony would terminate. Mrs. De Valville's going was followed by a short silence; when, after a deep sigh, he began—

‘I desired you, father,’ said he, turning to us, ‘to be here this morning; but I have not yet told you the reasons that induced me to send for you: I was desirous, too, that my nephew should be present; and he ought to be so, because this young lady is chiefly concerned.’

Here he stopped to take breath, whilst I blushed and trembled; and he went on thus—‘It was you, father, who introduced her to me; she was in a situation that greatly exposed her; you came to me to seek some assistance for her; you fixed upon me to give it her; you thought me an honest and upright man: but, father, you were deceived; I was not worthy of your confidence.’

As the monk seemed desirous to stop him by a motion he made for that purpose—‘Oh, father!’ resumed he, addressing himself to him, ‘in the name of that Being whose justice I would soften and disarm, do not oppose the resolution I have taken to set myself in a true light! You know the esteem, and, perhaps, the veneration, with which you have sincerely honoured me; you know the reputation I have publicly enjoyed; that I have been revered as a man of virtue and piety; and that I have enjoyed the advantages due to goodness alone: but, alas! I have not deserved them; I was only in shew and appearance what I now sincerely, and from the bottom of my soul, wish I had been in reality. The recompences of virtue which I have received, I now look on as a theft that I have committed; an insult on that Divine Goodness I only seemed to imitate. Suffer me, then, to expiate my guilt, if possible, by a confession of that base, that hypocritical behaviour, that has deceived

‘you and the world: and let me take that shame and humiliation to myself I have deserved; let me inspire all that horror that I should formerly have raised in every breast, had the black marks of my secret guilt been discovered. Yes, father,’ resumed he, after a moment's pause, with eyes bathed in tears, and with the most moving tone; ‘this was the man whom you came to entrust with this young lady: you made application to a vile, a wicked wretch; and all these good actions you have seen me engaged in are so many crimes, which enhance my guilt; masks under which I have committed the blackest, the most infamous, actions.’

‘Enough, Sir; here is enough!’ returned Father St. Vincent. ‘Come, let us praise God for the sentiments with which he inspires you. What obligations have we to adore his goodness! How great, how incomprehensible his mercy! How infinite his favours!—Yes, Sir, you are very guilty; you have reason to renounce our esteem, and the favourable opinion the world has conceived of you; to despise yourself, and be covered with shame: but we are not at a confession; therefore compose yourself. It is not the sinner, the man involved in guilt and misery, that we esteem and value; but the man whom God regards and pities, and on whom he pours the plenitude of his mercies. May we end our lives in the same pious disposition as you do! Mention no more your crimes; you have said enough on this subject; for, if your repentance is sincere, that Being who delights in mercy will forgive you.’

The good religious accompanied this discourse with his tears, in which Valville and I joined.

‘I have not yet said all, father,’ returned Mr. De Climal. ‘No, Sir, no!’ replied the monk; ‘pray have done; you need not go any farther; satisfy yourself with what you have already said; for the rest would be superfluous, and would be, perhaps, a piece of indulgence: it is sometimes sweet and comfortable to abandon one's self to a disposition like yours.—Well, Sir, deprive yourself of this consolation; mortify the desire you have of

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owning more of your faults: God will accept both of what you have said, and what you desire to say.

'Ah, father!' cried the sick gentleman, 'pray do not stop me; it would be a comfort to me to be able to bury my guilt in eternal silence; for I am far from tasting the sweet satisfaction you describe; God will not grant me so great a favour, who have merited nothing but indignation: it is enough if he gives me strength to support the deserved confusion with which I am covered. Yes, Sir, this confession of my villainy loads me with shame; every word of it tortures me: and I thank God for enabling me thus to sacrifice my detested pride! Permit me, then, to improve a shame that punishes me. O that I were able, if possible, to proportion my humiliation to my guilt, and the falsity of those virtues with which I have been honoured! I am sorry I have been obliged to send Mrs. De Valville away; for I ought to have blushed before a sister who is not yet, perhaps, undeceived: I know she would have interrupted me; her affection and too great tenderness would not have permitted her to hear what I had to say. But do you, father, repeat it to her: this I desire, as an instance of your piety and regard for me.

'This young lady, no doubt, told you the truth, in the recital she made of my behaviour to her; and, indeed, my whole design in relieving her was only in order to seduce her: thinking that her misfortunes had depressed her mind, and taken from her the courage of daring to remain virtuous amidst such complicated distress, I offered to secure her something to live upon, on condition that she would become unworthy of life. I made use of these base artifices in order to beat down and trample upon her young, and, I hoped, unfortified virtue; to pollute a soul truly amiable. But, father, I have said enough, since I have given a sufficient view into the shameful baseness of my designs; designs which now fill me with horror, which affright and terrify me, and give a double gloom to the dreary prospect that lies before me; new terrors more insupportable than all the agonies of death!—I beg pardon, Miss; and conjure you, if possible, to for-

get this wicked adventure, and never stain your chaste mind with the remembrance of my imprudence and folly. Accept of this acknowledgment as a reparation for a crime that has justly offended both God and you. When I left you, I had the baseness to reproach you with the small presents which you returned me; I insulted you with the dismal situation to which I abandoned you; and threatened you with revenge if you dared to complain of me.'

I gave way to my tears, while he was making me this generous and christian satisfaction; and was so touched, that I could not smother my sighs. Valville and the monk wiped their eyes, and remained silent. After a short pause, he resumed—'You know, Miss, I then offered you a contract to pay you annually five or six hundred livres? I have now, in my will, given you twelve hundred. You refused, with horror, the six hundred livres, when I proposed them as the recompence of a crime; accept now freely of the twelve hundred, as a reward for your virtue and prudence: it is just that I should afford you, in my repentance, a greater assistance than I offered you when involved in guilt. My nephew there is my chief heir: he is generous; and, I am persuaded, he will not at all regret what I have left you.'

'Ah, dear Sir!' cried Valville, with the tears in his eyes, and a look expressive of the highest satisfaction; 'this is an action laudable indeed; and entirely worthy of yourself! All that afflicts me is, that you do not do this in perfect health: as for me, I shall regret nothing but you, and the loss of that tenderness you express for me; which I would gladly preserve at the expence of the richest treasures; and, if God would grant my request, I should only desire the satisfaction of seeing you live as long as myself.'

'And I, Sir,' cried I, in my turn, with a deep sigh, 'am so sensible of your kindness, that I am at a loss to know how to express myself. I assure you, were I poorer than I am, the present that you make me would not console me for your loss; which I shall always look upon as a new misfortune. I see, Sir, that, if your life was preserved, you would be a  
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‘ sincere friend to me; and I should esteem that an incomparably greater advantage than what you so generously leave me.’

My tears here stopped my voice, and he appeared sensibly touched at my discourse. ‘ What you say, Miss,’ returned he, after some moments silence, ‘ answers the good opinion which I have always entertained of your heart; and, indeed, if God would prolong my life, I should endeavour to deserve the opinion you now entertain of me. I feel myself decay, and am entering upon a state unknown, from which there is no return: but it is not for me to presume to give you instructions for the conduct of your future life, since they would not proceed from a mouth sufficiently pure; but, since you think that in me you lose a sincere friend, I may be permitted, under that character, to mention one thing. I have tempted you to forfeit your innocence; and it is not owing to the want of any endeavours on my side that you have not been betrayed into a crime that would have destroyed all your peace, all just ground for inward complacency, and that amiable rectitude of heart which will ever render you an ornament to your sex, and dear to all the lovers of virtue. Let me entreat you, I say, to supplicate that Being in my behalf whom I have offended in offending you; express your forgiveness by petitioning his; and shew that I have left no taint upon your mind, by continually adhering to those principles which have supported you under my attacks: be virtuous, in spite of all opposition, and you will find, that “ to be good is to be happy;” it will raise you above many of the miseries of life; give you charms that time will not be able to efface; and render you for ever lovely, for ever blessed! Adieu, Miss!—Adieu, father!’ added he, addressing himself to the monk; ‘ I recommend her to your care.—You see, nephew, why I have detained you; you have seen me at her feet, and may have suspected that it was agreeable to her: she, you find, is innocent; and I thought myself obliged to let you know it.’

He stopped here, and we were going

to retire; when he said—‘ Nephew, pray go to my sister, and desire her to come in.’ And then addressing himself to me—‘ Miss,’ said he, ‘ Mrs. De Valville has told me how she came to know you: in the recital that you made her of your sufferings, and unhappy situation, you might naturally introduce into your mournful story an account of the flesh injuries you had received from me; tell me freely, did not you inform her of it? Did you name me?’

‘ I will tell you the truth, Sir,’ returned I, a little embarrassed at his question. ‘ When I left Father St. Vincent, I entered into the parlour of the convent to beg assistance of the abbess: Mrs. De Valville, who was there, observed my despair; was moved at my tears; and pressed me to tell her what afflicted me. I did not think of prejudicing you; I had nothing else to do but to raise her compassion; and, for that end, it was sufficient to relate my misfortunes: however, I did not mention your name at that time; not that I omitted it out of regard for you, but because I thought it unnecessary; and she would never have known more, if, some days after, speaking of the cloaths I sent back, I had not, by chance, named Mr. De Valville, to whom I sent them, as the nephew of the person who had given them to me. Thus, Sir, you see how unhappily she came to know it; and I am very sorry for my imprudence; I protest I had no malice in it: I might, indeed, deceive you; but I am too nearly affected, and too grateful, to hide any thing from you.’

‘ Well,’ said he, addressing himself to Father St. Vincent, ‘ my sister then knows it! I did not think it: this is a new increase of shame for me before I die; a confusion, father, that I am extremely sensible of!—Miss,’ added he, ‘ I thank you for it; pray, do not reproach yourself with it on any account; it is a piece of service you have done me: my sister knows me; and I am going to blush before her.’

Here I could hardly forbear making my grief be heard. My benefactress entered with Valville; and was surprized at my tears and sighs, which  
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her brother took notice of. 'Come, sister,' said he, 'I should have desired you to stay here, had I not apprehended your tenderness would have prevented what I had to say. I know you would not have been able to bear it: however, Father St. Vincent will be so good as to repeat it to you; and, thank God! you know the principal part of it already. This young lady has given you a just opinion of me. Father St. Vincent trusted her to my care; but she could not have fallen into worse hands: I resign her into yours. To that friendship you appeared to have for her, add all the tenderness you have for me; of which she is much more worthy. That share in your heart, which I have enjoyed, is a blessing I would leave her, and which will recompense the little honour and virtue she found in mine.'

'Ah, dear, dear brother, pray forbear!' returned Mrs. De Valville, who wept almost as much as I; 'pray, let me entreat you to forbear: I am not able to hear more. Yes, I will take care of Marianne: she will always be dear to me; you need not doubt it. You give her a right to command my heart, which is disposed to be eternally hers. But come, let us hear no more; you see the grief into which you have cast us all: pray, consider, you are not in a condition to talk so much; it fatigues you. Pray, how do you find yourself?'

'Like one that must live no longer!' said he. 'I am going, sister!—Adieu, father! Remember me in your prayers; you know the need I have of them!'

Scarce had he finished these last words, when he fainted away; and we thought him expiring. Two physicians were called, who were waiting in another room; the monk retired immediately; and Valville and I were desired to leave the chamber, while they endeavoured to assist him. Mrs. De Valville being resolved not to go, we went into the parlour, where we found an intimate friend of Mr. De Climal's, and two ladies related to the family, going into the sick gentleman's room. Valville prevented them, by telling them his uncle was senseless, and that they must stay and wait the event; so

that none went in but a clergyman, his confessor, who entered as he was talking to them.

Valville, who was sitting by me in the parlour, told me privately who these three persons were; I mean Mr. De Climal's friend, and the two ladies his relations; one of whom was the mother, and the other the daughter. The friend was a gentleman, grave and polite; he was a magistrate, and about sixty years old. The mother of the young lady might be about fifty or fifty-five: she was short; but this deficiency was made up in her circumference, which was large enough; she was of a dark complexion, and very ordinary; had a face large and bloated; with small black eyes, which at first appeared lively, but indeed were only curious and busy; always in motion, incessantly prying and seeking out something to amuse an empty, indolent mind, that has nothing in itself to entertain it; for some minds are inactive merely for want of ideas; it is this renders them so greedy of foreign objects, chiefly because they retain no impressions; and every thing, as it were, runs through their minds, and immediately vanishes; they are always prying, ever listening, but never thinking of any thing.

Such was the woman I am speaking of: however, I did not form so perfect an idea of her all at once; my reflections, though mature enough, could not extend so far; yet, notwithstanding, I then formed a very disagreeable idea of her character.

She no sooner saw me, but her eyes rushed upon me, and instantly ran over me; I say rushed, at the hazard of speaking improperly, to describe the greedy curiosity with which she examined me. Such glances as these are excessively troublesome; they quite confounded me; and I saw no other remedy for them, but, in my turn, to stare upon her in the same manner: this frequently succeeds with some persons, and frees people from a trouble like that which then disturbed me. She then, indeed, took off her eyes; but it was only for a moment, and then returned more earnestly than before. Sometimes she examined my countenance; sometimes my shape engaged her attention; then my cap; then my gown. I happened to cough; this redoubled

doubled her attention to observe how I coughed: I drew my handkerchief out of my pocket; this was a very interesting spectacle for her; a new object of curiosity.

As Valville sat pretty near her, she suddenly turned to speak to him; and asked—'Who is this young lady?' I heard her; for persons of her disposition never talk so low as they think they do: they are so inconsiderate, that they will not allow themselves time to be discreet. 'She is the daughter of a country lady, one of my mother's most intimate friends,' returned Valville, very negligently. 'Hah, hah! a country lady!' cried she. 'Is her mother in town?'—'No,' replied he again; 'this lady is in a convent in town.'—'Hah! in a convent! What! has she a mind to be a nun? And what convent is it?'—'Upon my word,' said he, 'I do not know the name of it.'—'Perhaps she has some relation there,' pursued she: 'she is very pretty; very pretty, indeed,' added she, interweaving each word with an earnest examination of my person and dress. At last, she grew tired of me, and sat herself to survey the magistrate; who, however, she was no stranger to; but whose silence and melancholy appeared to her worthy of consideration.

'It is very shocking, Sir,' said she to him immediately, 'that the gentleman should be dying already; he was very well a few days ago: who would have thought it? it is but ten days since we dined together.—But tell me, Mr. De Valville, is he very ill? He has a good constitution; I hope he will recover it. What do you think of it? How long has he been sick? I have been in the country; and, truly, I did not hear of it before yesterday. Is it true that he is speechless, and has lost his senses?'—'Yes, Madam,' returned Valville; 'it is but too true.'—'Mrs. De Valville, I suppose, is here?' replied she. 'Poor woman! she must be very disconsolate; is not she? They were very fond of each other! He is a mighty worthy man; and all the family must be sensible of his loss. Here is my girl has cried all day long for him; and I, too, indeed.' The young lady really looked very much dejected, but said not a word. Our eyes met sometimes as if by stealth; and she

seemed to have as much friendship for me in her looks, as she might have discovered for her in mine. I fancied she liked me; and, for my part, I was charmed with her, and had great reason to be so.

Nothing could appear more engaging than this lady; nothing more charming than the sweetness and smiling vivacity of her looks; she had a form embellished with every thing lovely; an air graceful, delicate, easy; every charm triumphed in her face, and adorned her person with unalterable beauties. Her shape was perfectly genteel and finished; her behaviour engaging, natural, and attended with something inexpressibly pleasing. She was but eighteen; and youth never appeared a greater ornament.

I heard it said, Madam, the other day, of a young lady, that she was in the spring of beauty: the term spring brought her I am speaking of to my mind; and, I dare lay a wager, it was some such blooming charms that gave birth to the expression; for I never read of Flora or Hebe, but I think of Miss De Fare, for this was her name.

She had a form tall, free, and sprightly; and an air and walk so light, that you would have thought she weighed nothing: in short, she was surrounded with the graces in all their various characters; had something so noble and attractive; and that nobleness appeared so easy, unaffected, and natural, that it required no attention to sustain it; it appeared independent of art, which neither gaiety nor sorrow were able to alter, and which seemed an essential attribute of the person itself.

Miss De Fare had not a very strong constitution; but her indispositions gave her an air more tender than sickly. She would have been glad to have had a little more fat; but I do not think she would have been any gainer by it; at least no face could appear better without it: for I am certain it could have added but one charm; but must have taken from it many others more engaging and poignant.

Notwithstanding the delicacy and sprightliness of her wit, she voluntarily held her tongue in company; she thought much, spoke little; and was so attentive, that nothing escaped her notice. I hardly ever heard her say any thing but what was pertinent, judicious,

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cious, and agreeable. When with her friends, she expressed herself with the frankness of persons of the most blunt disposition, though with all the delicacy of the most polite.

One could not help observing in her conversation a sagacity of sentiment, which was discovered in all she said; and which was expressed with the utmost life and spirit: her ideas appeared great and sublime; her soul noble and generous. But you will know her character much better by what I shall mention hereafter.

We had been there a considerable time, when Mrs. De Valville came from her brother, and told us that he was much better, and had perfectly recovered his senses. 'He asked me,' added she, addressing herself to me, 'if you were here still, Miss; and desired me not to send you back to your convent before you had dined with us.'—'You both do me too much honour,' returned I: 'I shall do what you please, Madam.'

'I wish he knew that I am here,' said the magistrate, his friend; 'for I have an extreme desire to see him, if possible.'—'And I, too,' said the lady: 'would it not be proper to let him know it? If he is better, he will not, perhaps, be sorry to see us.'—'What do you think of it, Madam?' The physicians, then, have greater hopes of his recovery; I am sincerely glad to hear it.'—'Alas, no, Madam! we have no such flattering prospect!' returned Mrs. De Valville: 'he is not quite so bad, and that is all; but I will go to him immediately, to know if your coming in will be attended with any inconvenience.' She scarce had left us, when we saw her returning with the physicians from the chamber. 'Gentlemen,' said she, 'may this gentleman and these two ladies go in to see my brother? Is he in a condition fit to receive them?'—'He is weak still,' returned one of them, 'and he wants rest: it would be much better to stay two or three hours first.'

'Oh, to be sure! we will wait, then,' said the magistrate: 'I will return in the afternoon.'—'It will not be worth your while to go,' replied Mrs. De Valville; 'you had much better stay dinner here.'—'No, Madam,' said he; 'I am very much

obliged to you; but cannot stay: I have some business to do.'

'As for me,' cried the lady, 'I have none; and I think it best to stay.—'

'Am not I in the right, Madam?—'

'Well, gentlemen,' continued she, 'tell us, then, what you think of Mr.

'De Climal? It runs in my head that he will recover; will not he? Do not

'you think his illness might proceed from some disorder in his breast?

'Six months ago he had a cold, which lasted a great while: I desired him to

'take care of it; but he neglected it a little. Is his fever high?'

'It is not the fever that we are most

'afraid of, Madam,' said the other physician: 'we can give no certain

'judgment yet; but we think him in a very dangerous condition.'

After this discourse they left us; the magistrate followed; and Mrs. De Fare and Miss, Mrs. De Valville, her son, and I, staid in the parlour.

It was pretty late, when a servant came to tell us dinner was ready. Mrs. De Valville went for a moment into her brother's room, and was told that he had dropped asleep; on which she immediately returned with the priest, who said he would return again after dinner; and we sat down to table something less disturbed than we had been in the morning.

I do not question, Madam, but this particular detail has been disagreeable to you; but I could not pass it over, as it is necessary to introduce some more interesting events. I sat at table by Miss De Fare; and I imagined, by her graceful behaviour, that she was glad of this occasion to commence an acquaintance with me. We anticipated the pleasures of friendship by a variety of those little kindnesses which a mutual inclination suggests to two persons who take a delight in each other. We looked upon each other with the sweetest complacency; and, as love has it's rights too, I sometimes cast a tender regard at Valville; who, on his side, according to custom, had his eyes almost continually fixed upon me.

I believe Miss De Fare took notice of our regards. 'Miss,' said she to me very low, whilst her mother and Mrs. De Valville were talking together, 'I would not be mistaken; but I do not think you will leave Paris.'

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'I do not know what you mean, Miss,' returned I in the same tone, (and really I did not understand her at all;) 'but I fancy I may, without any risk, venture to affirm that your thoughts are always just. Will you please to tell me your meaning?'

'It is,' returned she, whispering, 'that, as my lady your mother is one of Mrs. De Valville's dearest friends, you may, perhaps, marry my cousin; tell me, now, am not I in the right?'

It was not very easy to answer her; the question discomposed and alarmed me: I blushed; and then was afraid she would take notice of it, and that this would betray a secret which would do me too much honour. In fine, I do not know what answer I should have returned, if her mother had not extricated me out of this perplexity. It was then happy for me, that she was one of those women who observe every thing, and will be informed of every thing too. She perceived that we were talking to each other—'What is that, daughter? What subject are you upon? You smile, and Miss blushes.' (For nothing escaped her.) 'May we know what you are saying?'—'I shall make no secret of it,' returned she. 'I should be charmed to have Miss stay at Paris; and I was saying that I wished she might marry Mr. De Valville.'

'Hah, hah!' cried she, 'that is very good! I have been just thinking so myself: besides, I have observed that neither of them seem as if they would be sorry for it; but how do we know but it is their design! it looks very like it.'

'And why not?' said Mrs. De Valville, who apparently saw no hazard in taking our part in these circumstances, and with a generosity of mind with which I feel myself transported whenever I reflect on it; and which I never think of without tears of gratitude and affection: who, I say, by an admirable generosity of mind, to give us infallible proofs of her goodness, gladly seized this opportunity to prepare them for our marriage. 'And why not?' said she, with a look full of goodness; 'my son will have no reason to complain, if it should happen so.'—'O Madam, every body must be of your opinion,' replied Mrs. De Fare: 'we ought to congratu-

tulate him upon his happiness; and I shall make him my compliments upon it beforehand. I will assure you I think nobody can be more agreeably united.'—'And I am sure I shall envy nobody's lot,' returned Valville, with an air free and easy; whilst I bowed to thank her for her civility, without saying any thing; for I thought I ought to be silent, and give my benefactress an opportunity of speaking for me; before whom I imagined that, on this occasion, I ought to preserve a modest and respectful silence. I could not, however, avoid giving her a look full of tenderness and gratitude. And, though this conversation was carried on in jest, Mrs. De Fare did not doubt but that I should marry Valville.

'I must take my leave as soon as I have seen Mr. De Climal; and then we will conduct your daughter-in-law to her convent,' said she to Mrs. De Valville. 'But hold; I have thought of something better than that; I shall not lie to-night in town; I must return to my country-house, which, you know, is but about a mile from hence: I think, if you can spare Miss, you may write or send to the convent, that they may not wait for her, and we will take her with us. These ladies ought to become a little better acquainted; and, I am sure, you will give them both a very sensible pleasure.'

Miss De Fare entered into the conversation; and joined her entreaties to those of her mother with such success, that Mrs. De Valville told them she consented to it, and that I was my own mistress. 'It is true,' said she; 'you have no servant with you, but you will find enough at Mr. De Fare's. Go, I will call at your convent; and to-morrow, if my brother's illness will permit me to leave him, I will come about five in the evening, to bring you back; or else send for you.'—'Since I have your permission, Madam,' said I, 'I will make no difficulty of going.'

Here we arose from table. Valville appeared charmed at the little party we had just made and interested in our favour; and I easily perceived the rising joy which spread over his face, and sufficiently expressed his inward satisfaction. What convincing proofs my dear benefactress had given us of the sincerity



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sincerity of her promises! She had not only acknowledged that I was designed for her son, but let me already reap some of the benefits that dear relation would shortly entitle me to, by recommending me to her friends, and introducing me into the world under that character. Was it possible to behave more agreeably, than thus to put it in a manner out of her power to disengage herself!

But let us leave Mr. De Climal's. Mrs. De Fare could not obtain leave to see him, because he was inclined to doze, and was willing to take some rest: when we were ready to go, Valville artfully dropped, in his discourse to this lady, some hints which obliged her to ask him to follow us, and sup with us at her house. 'The weather, Sir,' said she, 'is extremely fine and delightful; and you may, if you please, return to-night; or stay till to-morrow, if you like it better.'—'But will you, Madam, permit me to go?' said he, laughing, addressing himself to his mother, whose approbation he was willing to gain to all his actions. 'Yes, son,' said she; 'go, if you desire it; for I shall not leave my brother till it is pretty late.' Upon this we took our leave, and parted.

We soon arrived at this lady's country-house; which was a stately building, adorned with every thing that could render it grand and magnificent. Valville was there almost as soon as we. We rested a moment; and then went into the garden, attended only by Miss De Fare, and spent our time in walking. Every thing here contributed to inspire me with satisfaction and delight; the walks, the fountains, and painted alcoves, were very beautiful: but what rendered all these charming, was the company of my dear Valville; for, without him, the shady groves would have appeared gloomy and solitary, and all this pleasing scene, perhaps, have been passed over unregarded. I freely enjoyed the conversation of a man whom I loved with the tenderest affection; of a man who adored me, and who had the liberty of telling me so, and discoursing on his agreeable passion; a privilege I had not yet enjoyed without restraint; and I had an opportunity of making him a modest return, which I did not fail to do. He talked; I answered him with my looks;

and his language was not more tender than my glances: he immediately perceived it; and his discourse grew insensibly more passionate, and consequently the innocent language of my eyes more sweet.

How enchanting, how agreeable, my situation! On the one side Valville, who almost idolized me; on the other, Miss De Fare, who loaded me with caresses, and sought every occasion to inspire me with friendship; and, on my own side, a heart full of sensibility for both. We all three walked into a wood which surrounded the house and garden, and left Mrs. De Fare busy in receiving two persons who came to sup with her: and, as Valville's tenderness frequently interrupted this amiable lady's conversation, we, out of a frolick, ran away from him, that we might have him at a distance; and threw at him handfuls of leaves and boughs that we snatched from the trees and hedges. He pursued us; we ran; he seized me: she came to my assistance; and my soul gave itself up to an innocent joy too exquisite to last long.

We were thus diverting ourselves, when a servant came to tell us supper was ready, and they only staid for us; on which we went in immediately.

At supper, the conversation passed upon the news they heard from Mr. De Fare, who was in the army: at last, they spoke of me; and the company loaded me with the most obliging compliments; for Mrs. De Fare had already informed them of my intended nuptials, and congratulated Valville on his approaching happiness.

The supper being over, and the company gone, Mrs. De Fare invited Valville to stay till the next day, which he consented to without much importunity. I am almost come to touch upon the fatal catastrophe which threatens me; and to-morrow I shall shed torrents of tears.

I arose between ten and eleven in the morning; about a quarter of an hour after Mrs. De Fare's woman came to dress me: however new this kind of service was to me, I let her assist me with as good a grace, and as much freedom, as if it had been familiar to me. I ought to support my rank, and behave consistent with my present circumstances: this I was instantly sensible of. I had a natural taste; or, if

you will, a vanity inexpressibly delicate, which taught me at once how to behave, and which gave this servant no room to think me a novice.

Scarce had she done dressing me, when I heard the voice of Miss De Fare, who was coming to me, and was talking with another person who was with her: I imagined it was Valville; and was thinking to meet her, but she did not give me time, but instantly came in. But, oh, Madam! guess with whom. I was immediately shocked as if I had been struck with thunder. How inexpressible was my surprize and consternation, when I saw it was the linen-drafter with whom I had lived as a shop-maid!

Miss De Fare ran to embrace me with an air of gaiety; but this fatal object, this unwelcome Mrs. Du Tour, had already struck my eyes, and turned me into a statue: I received her embrace without motion, and with a countenance more pale than death; and was so overwhelmed with surprize, that I knew not where I was. 'Ah, my dear! what is the matter? Why do not you speak to me?' cried Miss De Fare, astonished at my silence and want of motion.

'Ods my life! Sure I am dim-sighted!—Is it you, Marianne?' cried Mrs. Du Tour. 'Even so; the same, positively! How folks meet! I came here to shew some linen to some of your neighbours, who sent for me; and so, as I was about to return home, says I—"I will even call at Madam De Fare's, to see if she wants any thing." You found me in her chamber; and so then brought me here, where I found her: sure, it was my good angel that inspired me with the thought of coming to your house! Here she cast her arms about my neck. What good fortune have you had? How pretty and well-dressed you are! Really I am glad to see you so spruce and fine. La! how it becomes you! I think, indeed, you have a waiting-woman. Pray, tell me how all this came to pass? It is very wonderful! How, my dear girl, did it happen?'

To this discourse I was unable to utter a word; I was quite abashed and stupid with surprize.

Here Valville came in, smiling, with an air of gaiety; but he no sooner saw

Mrs. Du Tour but he blushed, changed countenance, and stood immovable as well as I: you will judge that he might easily foresee the fatal consequence of this adventure; and all this passed in much less time than I can relate it to you.

'Softly, Mrs. Du Tour, softly!' cried the young lady; 'you are mistaken, surely! you do not know who you speak to: it is not that Marianne you mean.'—'Not her!' said the linen-drafter; 'not her! Why, you may as well tell me I am not Mrs. Du Tour! Marry, ask her yourself if I am in the wrong.—Well, why don't you speak, child? Is it not true that you are she? Did not you lodge a few days with me, to learn my business? Was it not Mr. De Climal that put you to board with me? and did not he abandon you one holiday? "the better day, the better deed;" and did not care a fig what became of you?—Lack-a-day! how the poor orphan cried about it! Why, I found her with her hair hanging about her ears, like a mad person; her cap and every thing littered about! La! how I pitted the poor thing!'

'Pray take care what you say, Madam!' said Miss De Fare, quite astonished: 'I tell you it cannot be.'—'Well, I do not say that it can be,' continued Mrs. Du Tour; 'but I say that it is, and that it is as well: and I will tell you more than that; it was to Mr. De Valville that I sent the bundle of cloaths Mr. De Climal had given her; and, besides, I have another token; I have still a handkerchief that she left behind her at my house; it is not worth much, indeed; but, however, it is hers, and I have nothing to do with it; I have had it washed, though it was hardly worth it. However, one word is as good as a hundred; and, as I am none of those that are given to talk, and such as that, look ye, I tell you, once for all, that it is Marianne; that is the name she went by when she was with me; and, if it is not her name still, the must have changed it; for I never knew she had any other, nor the neither: it was a country parson's sister who gave it her; for, poor girl! she does not know herself who she is: she told me of it; and I cannot see what reason



reason there is to make such a mighty secret of it. Heaven knows, I respect the girl, and would not do her an injury for the world. Surely I may be allowed to know folks again when I see them, as well as another; especially my own shopmaid: pray, where is the difficulty of that? But, marry-come-up! if she is grown proud, and above owning her old acquaintance, what care I! I cannot answer for that; I only rub up her memory a little: I have nothing to say against her; I always thought her very honest and good; and I am sure nobody can speak more handsomely of her than I do, if she were a dutchess.

At these last words, Mrs. De Fare's woman simpered, and left us with an ill-natured pleasure in her looks: as for me, I was ready to faint; my knees trembled, and I sunk into an elbow-chair that stood near me, where I was only able to weep and cast forth the most bitter sighs. Miss De Fare held down her head, and said nothing. Valville, who had not yet opened his mouth, at last drew near to Mrs. Du Tour; and, taking her by the hand—'Madam,' said he, 'let me persuade you to retire immediately: I conjure you to do me this favour, dear Mrs. Du Tour; oblige me in this, and you shall lose nothing by it. Be seen no more here; be discreet: and expect from me, in return, all the service I can render you.'

'Lack-a-day! with all my heart,' returned she; 'I am very sorry that I have said any thing to displease you: but I thought no harm; what would you have of me? I am no witch. Put yourself in my place.'—'Well, well, Madam, you are in the right,' said he, interrupting her; 'but, pray, be gone: go, I entreat you.'—'Your servant, Sir,' returned she; 'I beg pardon.—Miss, your servant,' added she, turning to Miss De Fare.—'Adieu, Marianne! Farewel, child! I wish you no more harm than I do myself. Good luck attend you!—But, Miss, if you would look at what I have got, perhaps you may take something of me,' added she, addressing herself to Miss De Fare. 'No, no, I tell you; I shall buy all you have, and pay you for it to-morrow,'

returned Valville, pushing her back, till at last she left us.

My tears and sighs continued; I durst not lift up my eyes, and was oppressed with the severest affliction.

'Mr. De Valville,' said Miss De Fare, who had for some time been silent, and had attended to all that passed, 'pray explain to me what all this means?'

'Oh, dear cousin!' returned he, throwing himself at her feet, 'in the name of all that is most dear to you, save my life: it is nothing less I beg of you. I conjure you, by all the goodness and generosity of your heart, not to abandon me: it is true, the lady was a few days at this linen-drawer's; she lost her father and mother in her infancy. It is believed that they were foreigners: it is an undoubted matter of fact that they were assassinated in a stage-coach, with a number of their domesticks. Their retinue only proved they were persons of quality: this lady was drawn from under the body of her mother; was educated by a clergyman in the country; brought up to Paris by his sister, who died there, and left her quite destitute. A monk presented her to my uncle: I came to know her by chance; and I love and adore her. If I lose her, I lose my life: I have already told you that her parents travelled with servants of both sexes. She is a lady of quality; nobody has ever doubted it: her person, her graceful behaviour, and her amiable character, are additional proofs of it. Perhaps her extraction is superior to mine: perhaps, if it was known, I should be too much honoured with her tenderness. My mother knows all I have told you; and much more that I have not time to relate: she is ravished with her; she placed her in a convent; she consents that I should love her; she consents that I should marry her; and you deserve to be acquainted with it too. You have a soul too great to render you capable of making an ill use of the fatal accident which conceals her birth: you cannot look upon that misfortune as a crime; a misfortune, accompanied with such circumstances as I have related, ought not to deprive a lady, so lovely, of the rank to which

‘ which it plainly appears she was born; nor of the regard and respect she merits from every honest, every worthy person. Preserve, then, your esteem and friendship for her: preserve me my wife; preserve to yourself a friend worthy a place in your affections; a friend, whose innate goodness and unspotted honour will ever render her invaluable; a soul which you will make eternally yours, besides mine, whose gratitude shall know no bounds. But it is not enough not to divulge our secret: you had here a servant just now who heard all; we must gain her over to our party, and we must be expeditious.’

‘ That is what I was thinking of,’ said Miss De Fare, who interrupted him to ring the bell. ‘ Compose yourself, Sir; I shall remedy that immediately: trust all to me, and fear nothing. Your story has moved me even to tears: I have always had a very high esteem for you; but you have now given me a thousand times more. I look upon Mrs. De Valville’s conduct, on this occasion, as quite admirable and worthy of herself: I cannot tell you how much I love her for it, or how much her conduct touches me; nor shall my heart ever be outdone by hers in generosity and affection.—My dear friend,’ added she, turning to me with a look full of tenderness, ‘ wipe away your tears, and let us think of nothing but of being united by a friendship which will last as long as ourselves.’ Here she presented me her hand; I took hold of it, kissed it, and bathed it with my tears, with a supplicating air, mingled with grati-

tude and affection, but without any appearance of being humbled. ‘ The friendship that you do me the honour to ask, shall be dearer to me than my life: I only desire to live for you and Valville,’ replied I, intermingled with sighs which my tenderness forced from me.

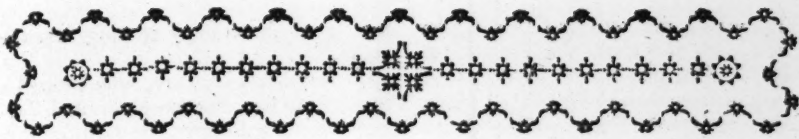
I was unable to say more; Miss De Fare wept as she embraced me; and was surprized in that posture by the servant I have mentioned, who was come to know why she had rung the bell.

‘ Come hither, Favier,’ said she, in a commanding tone; ‘ you have an affection for me; at least, I think so; but, however, you have seen what has passed between Du Tour and us. Observe what I say; I will certainly ruin you, one time or other, if ever you mention a single word of it: but, on the other hand, I promise to make your fortune, as a reward of your silence.’—‘ And I promise, on that condition,’ said Valville, ‘ she shall partake of mine.’

Favier, with blushes that she could not conceal, assured us she would hold her tongue; but it was too late, she had already disburdened herself of the secret: but it is time to break off. I must make you wait till you receive the Sixth Part, before you see the events her indiscretion occasioned. I soon began to be looked on as a person of some consequence; and people of the highest rank were brought over to oppose my happiness, and to endeavour to crush my hopes. I intended, before I had gone thus far, to have given you the history of my friend the nun; but I find I must defer it.

END OF THE FIFTH PART.

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THE  
VIRTUOUS ORPHAN.

PART VI.



YOU see here, Madam, the Sixth Part of my life. Does not my being so extraordinarily expeditious a little surprize you? You have not yet, I fancy, quite read over the Fifth. How lazy is this! Come, Madam, endeavour to follow me; and read, at least, as fast as I write.

You tell me you have obliged many of your friends by giving them my adventures to read. Some, you say, were quite charmed with my reflections; and others would have been as well pleased without them. I am at present pretty much in the same disposition as the latter; and shall, perhaps, give less reason for these persons to think me tedious. My nun will not be quite so impertinent as I have been; and, you may depend upon it, I will follow her example.

But I should consider, that my charging myself with impertinence is paying but an ill compliment to those worthy persons who approve and admire my reflections; for if they have been mere idle trifling, they certainly were highly to blame to be so delighted with them, and were so far without true taste; and it may be thought that, in deference to their superior judgment, I ought to retract what I have said, and not be quite so severe upon myself. But I would not have you mistake me, Madam, when I call myself an impertinent; between you and I, it is only in jest; besides, a little complaisance for those that think me so. You do me a great deal of honour in approving my manner of writ-

ing, and desiring me to continue my reflections; and I am highly sensible of your goodness in being so lavish of your compliments on that occasion. But those who desire me to keep to a bare recital of facts, give me a great deal of pleasure: my self-love declares for you; but my laziness openly declares for them. However, I think, upon the whole, it will be a commendable piece of ambition to endeavour to please you both: I shall therefore not quite leave reflecting, though I shall do it seldomer, and endeavour to reduce these starts of fancy into as little compass as possible.

We broke off at the discourse Miss De Fare and Valville addressed to Favier; and I have told you that the precaution they took proved to no purpose. You remember Favier retired before Mrs. Du Tour left the room, and she had not disappeared above a quarter of an hour before her return; but that quarter of an hour she had employed against me. She had no sooner left my chamber, but she hastened to Mrs. De Fare's, to whom she related all she had heard. She durst not, indeed, confess that she had done so; Miss De Fare spoke to her in a tone which made her tremble, and prevented her being sincere enough to confess it. I observed that she coloured, as I have already said; and, notwithstanding my own confusion, I could not help dreading that that was the cause she left us in a manner that shewed she was very much disconcerted, and Miss De Fare began again to endeavour to console me: I held her hand, which I bathed with my tears;

tears, whilst she returned this tender action with the most affectionate caresses. 'Oh, my dearest friend! why do you weep thus?' said she. 'What can you fear? I am persuaded she will not mention a word; we have just engaged her by the most powerful motives to be silent. I have told her that her indiscretion will ruin her; that her silence will make her fortune; and, after the threatenings with which I have intimidated her, after the rewards I have promised her, can you imagine that she will dare to open her mouth to your prejudice? Is there the least appearance that she will ever betray us? Compose yourself then; give me this mark of your friendship and confidence; or shall I believe that I am the cause of your tears? Shall I think that you blush at having me a witness of what is passed; and that you suspect my having some sentiments that will humble you? Can you thus injure my friendship, which unites me to you by the strongest ties, and makes me love you dearer than ever; that makes me interest myself in your affairs; and increases my regard for you in proportion to your affliction? I must believe this is the case; and, if it be, what greater reason can I have to complain of your injustice? How injurious, how disobliging, is this to a heart like mine!'

This discourse redoubled my tenderness, and consequently my tears: I had not the power to speak; but I pressed her hand between mine, and kissed it a thousand times as an expression of my gratitude.

'Pray, my dear Marianne, forbear,' said Valville; 'somebody may come in: Mrs. De Fare herself may surprise us; and what must she think if she finds you in this condition? What reason can we give her for it? And why do you afflict yourself so? It can have no ill consequence, take my word for it,' added he, casting himself at my feet, with a more passionate air, and more affection in his looks, than, methought, I had ever discovered: whilst my regards, which I successively cast on the friend and the lover, expressed how sensible I was of their kindness, in thus endeavouring to give me the sweetest consolation; when

we heard some steps coming near the room.

It was Mrs. De Fare, who entered a moment after: her daughter and Valville placed themselves on each side me; and I had just time to wipe away my tears before she appeared; but every impression of those emotions with which I had been agitated, remained still on my countenance; there might be seen there an air of grief and consternation, which I could not remove.

'Pretend to be sick!' said Miss De Fare, hastily; 'and we will say that you were suddenly taken ill.' Scarcely had she said these words before we saw her mother: I only saluted her with a bow, because of the sudden illness we had agreed I should affect; and which, indeed, was true enough. She looked at me without saluting me.

'What! is she indisposed?' said she to Valville, with an unconcerned and uncivil air. 'Yes, Madam,' returned he; 'we have had some difficulty to recover the lady from a fainting fit with which she was seized.'—'She is still extremely weak,' added Miss De Fare, who seemed much surprized at the little ceremony her mother used in speaking of me. 'But,' returned the lady, in the same unconcerned tone, without ever calling me Miss, 'if she has a mind, we will send her back to Paris.'—'I will lend her my coach,' Madam, said Valville, roughly: 'we do not want your coach; she shall return in mine, which is come for me.'—'You are in the right,' said she; 'it is equal to me.'—'What now, mother!' cried her daughter: 'I did not think she was to go so soon; I think she should stay a little longer.'—'No, Miss!' said I then, in my turn, leaning upon Valville's arm to arise; 'no; let me go; I give you a thousand thanks for your care of me; but, indeed, I had better retire, since I find I cannot stay here much longer. Let us go down, Sir; I shall be glad to take a little air till your coach is ready.'—'But, mother,' said Miss De Fare again, 'pray consider a little; should we let the lady return home alone in the coach? And, since she is absolutely resolved to leave us, should not we wait upon her? or, at least, I should have one of your maids with me to conduct her to the convent, or



‘to Mrs. De Valville’s, who committed her to your care; or else there will be none to accompany her but my cousin; and, you know, that would not be very proper?’—‘No,’ returned her mother, smiling. ‘But, Mr. De Valville,’ added she, smiling, ‘I expect company; and, as neither my daughter nor I can go, will not one of my maids do? She may have her that dressed her: it is but a step to Paris. Will not that do, child?’ said she, turning to me.

Valville, enraged at her blunt and rude behaviour, made no answer. ‘I want nobody, Madam,’ said I, fully persuaded that the woman she offered me had told her every thing; ‘I have no need of any body.’ This I said as I was leaving the room with Valville; while Miss De Fare cast down her eyes with an air of astonishment that was not to the honour of her mother.

‘Madam,’ said Valville to Mrs. De Fare, with a tone sharp and slighting, ‘the lady shall take my coach; you have offered her yours; you need only lend it me to follow her: the condition she is in disturbs me; so that if any thing happens, I shall be near enough to give her some assistance.’

‘What need you leave us?’ said she, smiling; ‘I do not see any necessity for that, since I offer to send one of my servants with her. Perhaps she may like better to stay: you know that; at five, Mrs. De Valville is to come and take her away in her coach; and as she is indisposed, and I have company, she may dine in her chamber here.’

‘Yes,’ said he, ‘the expedient is commodious enough; but I do not think it can be agreeable to her.’

‘Your seriousness is very diverting,’ returned she; ‘but, however, if there is no way to keep you, my coach is at your service.—Bourguignon,’ added she, immediately speaking to a footman, who passed by the chamber-door, ‘order them to put the horses to the coach. I think I see company coming.—Farewel, Sir! but it is very ill-natured of you to leave us.—My pretty child, your servant! you will soon recover.—Make her stay breakfast before she goes.’ On this, she took her leave of us: then, turning to Miss De Fare—‘Come, daughter,’

said she, ‘come, I want to speak to you.’

‘Presently, Madam; I am coming,’ returned she, looking upon Valville and I with a sad and melancholy countenance. ‘I do not know what to make of this behaviour; it does not at all resemble what passed last night. What can be the cause? Has that impudent wretch already told her? I can hardly believe it!’

‘You need not doubt it,’ returned Valville, who had given orders for the coach: ‘but no matter; Mrs. De Fare knows how much my mother interests herself in all that concerns this lady; and whatever she has been informed of, it cannot make her dispense with the regard and polite behaviour she ought always to preserve for her. Besides, what advantage can she propose to herself by behaving ill to a person for whom she fees both my mother and I have such a sincere respect? Might not this linen draper, whose discourse she has heard repeated to her, be mistaken, and take this lady for another? Has Miss answered her a word? Has she confirmed what has been said? It is true, she wept; but that was, perhaps, only because she feared her doing her an injury; it was surprize, or timidity: and all this is very possible in a person of her age, who fees herself accosted with so much rudeness.—It is not to you, cousin, that I have made use of this address; you know with what confidence I have delivered myself into your power: I would only say, that Mrs. De Fare ought, at least, to suspend her judgment, and not retort upon the word of her woman, who may have heard things wrong; who may have added to what she has heard; and who has only learned it from another woman; who, as I have already said, may have been deceived by a resemblance; and, even supposing she could not be deceived, it is an affair of such consequence as requires her to take some pains to clear it up, and put it beyond all doubt; and especially as there may be an infinite number of circumstances which may change considerably the face of things; as, in particular, those I have mentioned to you; and make it appear that this lady has reason to resent her treatment; but which can give

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her

her no right to treat her as she has done.'

You cannot imagine, Madam, with what spirit and concern Valville uttered this; nor with what tenderness for me he expressed all he said.

'If Mrs. De Fare had your great mind; if she had your way of thinking, Miss,' added he; 'I should readily have confessed every thing to her; but I forbore to do it: it would be a confidence, you will permit me to say, which would not be fit to repose in a mind like hers. However, Miss, she loves you; you have some power over her: endeavour to prevail upon her to be silent; tell her that my mother begs it of her as a favour, and that she cannot refuse it without declaring herself our common enemy, and raising such a personal quarrel as will never be made up. In short, my dear cousin, tell her how much you are interested in our happiness; and what uneasiness she will give you if she does not keep it secret.'

'Do not disturb yourself at all, Sir,' returned Miss De Fare; 'she shall be silent, I will promise you; I am going to throw myself on my knees to beg it of her; and I hope I shall not do it in vain.' But this was expressed with such a tone as shewed she wished, rather than hoped, for success.

Whilst they were discoursing thus, I sighed, and was under the greatest consternation. 'There is no remedy!' cried I sometimes; 'all is lost!' And, indeed, who would not have thought that this event would have broke off our marriage, and have raised insuperable obstacles to it?

'If Mrs. De Valville should surmount them all,' said I to myself sometimes; 'if she has resolution enough to do it; can I have the confidence to abuse her goodness, to expose her to all the blame, all the reproach, which she will draw upon herself from her whole family? Can that be any happiness to me which must terminate in being a subject of shame and repentance to her?'

This is what passed in my mind on a supposition even that Mrs. De Valville could not be overcome, and that she would inflexibly adhere to her attachment to me, notwithstanding all the ignominy with which I should be

loaded, if this adventure should become publick, as to all appearance it would.

The two coaches arrived in the court: Miss De Fare embraced me; she held me for a long time in her arms, from whence I could hardly disengage myself; and I got into Valville's coach with the tears in my eyes; turned out, as it were, with contempt and scorn, from a house in which I had been treated the day before with the utmost respect.

The coach drove away; Valville followed me in the other: we were sometimes a-breast, and then we talked to each other; he affected a gaiety which he was far from having; and, as soon as his coach was pretty near to mine—'Do you think still of what has passed?' said he to me very low, and putting out his head. 'For my part,' added he, 'nothing makes me uneasy, but the trouble it gives you.'—'No, no, Sir!' returned I; 'you are not so indifferent as you pretend to be: you know it is an affair of consequence; and the less you are sensible of it, the more it merits my concern.'—'We cannot continue the conversation,' returned he; 'but would you enter into your convent directly? Do not you think you should see my mother first?'

'No! I had better not,' said I: 'you know the condition in which we left Mr. De Climal. Mrs. De Valville is now, perhaps, overwhelmed with affliction; so I think it better to go immediately to the convent.'

'I think,' said Valville, 'I see my mother's coach at a distance.' He was not deceived; Mrs. De Valville had sent it much sooner than she had promised, to inform her son that Mr. De Climal was dead.

He received this news with a visible concern; and it affected me extremely: the last actions of his life had rendered him dear to me; and I wept very sincerely.

I then got out of Valville's coach, to whom I left it: he sent back Mrs. De Fare's, and I stepped into Mrs. De Valville's, and ordered the coachman to drive me to the convent; where I arrived very much dejected, a variety of displeasing reflections revolving in my mind.

I was three days without seeing any body from Mrs. De Valville: the fourth, in the morning, a servant came to tell me

me that she had been indisposed, but that I should see her the next day; and, just as I was leaving this domestick, he drew secretly a letter out of his pocket, which Valville had ordered him to deliver to me, and which I went to read in my chamber.

'I have not told my mother the accident that happened to you at Mrs. De Fare's,' said he; 'perhaps that lady will be discreet, if it be only to oblige her daughter, who will use all her interest to prevail upon her to be so: and, with these hopes, I thought I ought to hide from my mother an adventure which she had much better be ignorant of, if possible; since the discovery would only serve to disquiet and make her uneasy. She tells me she will see you to-morrow. I have spoke to Mrs. Du Tour, and engaged her in our interest: nothing has yet been divulged; pray take care, on your side, not to mention a syllable of it to my mother.' This was pretty near the substance of his letter; which I read, shaking my head at the article which recommended me to be silent.

'I cannot be of your opinion,' said I to myself: 'it would not be generous in me to conceal any thing that concerns her to whom I am under such vast obligations; it would be a kind of treachery and deceit which Mrs. De Valville ought never to find me guilty of, as well as a breach of our mutual confidence; and I cannot resolve upon so ungrateful a piece of dissimulation; I think I ought to declare all to her, whatever it cost me.'

Though these were my thoughts, I was not, however, yet determined how to act; that unfriendly reserve Valville advised me to make use of to my dear benefactress was very contrary to my apparent duty to her; so that I remained till the next day very much disturbed, and without taking any resolution upon it. At three in the afternoon I was told Mrs. De Valville was come; and I went to her into the parlour with an emotion which sprung from several motives.

'Shall I be silent?' said I to myself, as I went. 'It is certainly the safest way, though not the most honest: I cannot help thinking it base and ungenerous. Shall I speak? Surely it is the most worthy and noble

resolution I can take; but, at the same time, it is the most dangerous.' My case, however, was very urgent; I ought immediately to have fixed upon something. But I was in Mrs. De Valville's presence before I had come to any determination.

It is sometimes difficult to chuse between our inclinations and our duty. On the one hand I was in danger of robbing my heart of it's dearest treasure, the affections of Valville, and all that happiness I should experience in being united to a man I loved so tenderly. I did not at all think of his riches, or of the rank to which he would raise me. When we love sincerely, our hearts are only taken up with that all-powerful passion; it absorbs every other consideration; and any thing else, however important, would not have made me hesitate a moment. My dear benefactress had a right to be informed of a thing in which she herself was so much concerned, and which might possibly be attended with many inconveniences.

'My dear,' said she, as soon as she saw me, 'I have brought you a deed of twelve hundred livres a year that belongs to you: it has all requisite forms, take my word for it; my brother has left it you. My son, who is his heir, will lose nothing by it; since he is to marry you, he will have it again: but no matter, take it; it is yours; and I had rather a great deal he should receive it from you than his uncle.' How charming was this beginning!

'Dear Madam,' cried I, with a grateful tenderness in my looks, 'what touches me the nearest in this is, your manner of treating me! How many are the obligations I am under to you! Is there any thing of equal value with the tenderness with which you honour me? You know, my dear mother, I love Mr. De Valville; but still my heart is more yours than his; my gratitude to you is dearer to me than my love!' Here I began to weep. 'Thy gratitude, my dear,' said she, 'gives me a great deal of pleasure; but I shall never desire any other from thee than such as a daughter owes to a tender mother: such is the gratitude I expect from thee. Remember it is not a stranger, but my daughter, that I love: thou wilt

‘soon be perfectly so; and, I confess, I now wish it more than thou dost. I grow old; I have just lost the only brother I had left: I find I become every day more indifferent to this life; and all the happiness I propose to myself here is, to have thee near me; and, indeed, child, I cannot tell how to live without thee!’

My tears began again to flow at this moving discourse. ‘In a few days I shall take thee away from hence,’ added she; ‘for I have already provided a place for thee in another convent. Are you satisfied with Mrs. De Fare? I have not seen her since you were at my brother’s: she came to visit me yesterday; but I was indisposed, and saw no company. Was there any thing more said upon thy marriage with Valville?’

‘No, mamma; there was very little said of it,’ returned I, confused and penetrated with so many marks of her tenderness; ‘and I cannot presume to hope they will speak of it any more in such an agreeable manner as they have done.’—‘How! what do you mean?’ replied she. ‘Why do you talk so? Do you suspect my coachman’s discretion? It was not in his power, child, to betray us!’—‘Has Mr. De Valville then told you nothing, Madam?’ returned I. ‘No!’ said she; ‘what has happened, pray?’—‘All my hopes are lost! I am undone, Madam! Mrs. De Fare knows who I am!’ replied I. ‘Hah! who told her?’ cried she. ‘How did she come to know it?’—‘By the most unhappy accident in the world!’ returned I. ‘The linen-drafter, with whom I was some days, unfortunately came thither to offer some goods to sale; and there she found me.’—‘I am very sorry for it,’ said she; ‘nothing could have happened worse! But did she know thee? Pray, child, make haste to tell me what passed!’—‘O yes! she knew me immediately,’ returned I; ‘she embraced me with that familiarity which she thought she had a title to; appeared surprized to see me so well dressed; called me nothing but Marianne; and, when she was told that she was mistaken, and took me for another person, she insisted upon the contrary; and, to support what she said, mentioned a great many circumstances which must en-

tirely discourage you; hinder you from concluding our marriage, and deprive me of the happiness of having you, indeed, for my mother! This happened in my room; Miss De Fare was present; she, indeed, has a mind perfectly great and generous; and to her Mr. De Valville related every thing: she has shewn me neither less respect nor friendship; on the contrary, she has promised to keep it an eternal secret, and neglected nothing in order to console me. But I am born to be so unhappy, Madam, that her generosity can be of no service to me.’—‘Is that all? Do not afflict yourself so,’ interrupted she: ‘if it is only known to Miss De Fare, I am easy, and all is well; we may safely confide in her; and you were to blame to say Mrs. De Fare knows it. I dare say her daughter will never mention it to her; and she is the only woman I should have been afraid of.’—‘But, alas! mamma,’ returned I, ‘Mrs. De Fare does know it; her woman was in the room, and heard all that the linen-drafter said, and has repeated every thing to her; and what persuades us to believe so, is, that that lady, who came into the room presently after, did not treat me with such respect as she had done the day before; her behaviour was quite changed. Dear Madam, I am obliged to confess this to you; I could not be so perfidious as to hide it. You have been so kind as to say that I am the daughter of one of your most intimate friends in the country: but you can no longer make use of that expedient; Mrs. De Fare knows that I am only a poor orphan; or, at least, that I do not know who brought me into the world; and that it was out of mere charity that Mr. De Climal placed me with Mrs. Du Tour. This is what you must regulate your designs by, and what I thought my duty to inform you of. Mr. De Valville has not told you of it; but the reason is, because he loves me, and fears that this will make you withdraw your consent to our nuptials. You must pardon him; he is your son; and this is a liberty that he has a greater right to take with you, because nobody is so nearly concerned in this adventure as himself: he would suffer most, indeed, as he would



‘ would be my husband ; but I, who  
 ‘ would reap all the advantages of it,  
 ‘ ought not to be prevailed upon to  
 ‘ obtain it by any means which will be  
 ‘ prejudicial to you. I, whom you have  
 ‘ loaded with benefits, and who owe  
 ‘ the title of your daughter to the  
 ‘ boundless goodness and generosity of  
 ‘ your heart, have not the same privi-  
 ‘ leges as Mr. De Valville; I imagine  
 ‘ it would be unpardonable in me to  
 ‘ use any deceit with you, and to con-  
 ‘ ceal from you a circumstance which,  
 ‘ to all appearance, will dissuade you  
 ‘ from the resolution of marrying us :  
 ‘ a happiness too great for me rea-  
 ‘ sonably to expect.’

Mrs. De Valville, while I spoke thus, looked upon me with an eager attention, into the motives of which I could not penetrate: she seemed as if lost in thought; and, by the air with which she fixed her eyes on me, she seemed rather to examine than listen to me. I resumed.

‘ You were desirous of taking such  
 ‘ measures as would have prevented  
 ‘ my being known; but now those pre-  
 ‘ cautions are useless. Probably Mrs.  
 ‘ De Fare will tell every thing, in spite  
 ‘ of all that her daughter can say to  
 ‘ conjure her to forbear. See, dear  
 ‘ Madam, what would be the case of  
 ‘ your daughter-in-law if I should  
 ‘ marry Valville! I shall never be com-  
 ‘ forted for the loss of that happiness  
 ‘ you have so much reason to deprive  
 ‘ me of; but I should find less com-  
 ‘ fort still were I able to deceive you.’

Mrs. De Valville was some moments without answering me; she appeared more thoughtful than sad: at last, after a sigh, she said—‘ My dear child, you  
 ‘ both afflict and charm me; I must  
 ‘ confess that thy ill-fortune is very  
 ‘ obstinate. Is there no way to engage  
 ‘ Mrs. Du Tour to say she was mis-  
 ‘ taken, without my appearing in it?  
 ‘ Pray tell me what answer you made  
 ‘ her?’—‘ None at all, Madam,’ re-  
 ‘ turned I; ‘ I was unable to speak; my  
 ‘ tears stopped my voice; while Miss  
 ‘ De Fare continued telling her that  
 ‘ she did not know me.’—‘ Poor child!’  
 ‘ returned Mrs. De Valville; ‘ no, no! I  
 ‘ knew nothing of all this; my son  
 ‘ would have been far from informing  
 ‘ me of it: and, as you say, he is very  
 ‘ excusable; and, perhaps, he has even  
 ‘ desired you not to mention it to me?’

—‘ Yes, Madam,’ returned I; ‘ he  
 ‘ loves me, you know; and that is his  
 ‘ excuse: it was but yesterday that he  
 ‘ desired me to be silent.’—‘ How, yes-  
 ‘ terday!’ cried she; ‘ did he come to  
 ‘ see you then?’—‘ No, Madam,’ re-  
 ‘ turned I; ‘ but he wrote to me: I beg  
 ‘ you would not let him know that I  
 ‘ told you of it. The footman you  
 ‘ sent yesterday brought me this short  
 ‘ letter from him:’ and I immediately  
 ‘ gave it her; and she read it.

‘ I cannot blame my son,’ said she,  
 ‘ after she had read it: ‘ but thou art a  
 ‘ surprizing girl; and he has reason to  
 ‘ love thee. Here,’ added she, giving  
 ‘ me the letter; ‘ if men were wise enough  
 ‘ to value persons according to their  
 ‘ real worth, there would not be one  
 ‘ who would not envy his conquest:  
 ‘ our pride makes us pique ourselves  
 ‘ upon what is little and despicable in  
 ‘ comparison of what thou dost now.  
 ‘ Thou wast never more worthy of the  
 ‘ consent I have given to Valville’s  
 ‘ love; and I cannot recal it—my dear,  
 ‘ I can never recal it: whatever it cost  
 ‘ me, I am resolved to keep my word.  
 ‘ I will have thee live with me; thou  
 ‘ shalt be my comfort and the happi-  
 ‘ ness of my declining life: thou hast  
 ‘ given me a distaste to all other girls  
 ‘ which can be offered him; none but  
 ‘ thee can be tolerable to me. Leave  
 ‘ the management of every thing to me.  
 ‘ If Mrs. De Fare, who, indeed, is one  
 ‘ of the most weak and silly women I  
 ‘ ever knew; if she, I say, has divulged  
 ‘ nothing yet, which is hardly to be  
 ‘ believed in a person of her character;  
 ‘ I will write to her to-night in such a  
 ‘ manner as shall engage her to be  
 ‘ silent: however, as she is only very  
 ‘ weak, not ill-natured, I will pay her  
 ‘ a visit, and relate your whole history  
 ‘ to her. She is of an inquisitive dis-  
 ‘ position; she loves to be made a con-  
 ‘ fidante: I will make her ours; and  
 ‘ so much oblige her by it, that she  
 ‘ will be the first to commend my at-  
 ‘ tachment to thee; and will conceive  
 ‘ as high an opinion of thy extraction  
 ‘ as I do. And, supposing she has al-  
 ‘ ready been indiscreet, you have no  
 ‘ reason to make yourself uneasy about  
 ‘ it; we may think of an expedient to  
 ‘ remedy it: I need only shelter myself  
 ‘ from publick censure, and give them  
 ‘ no apparent reason to cast the blame  
 ‘ upon me. Valville is young, and  
 ‘ much

'much in love; and thou art extremely amiable, and capable of captivating the hearts of the most wise and prudent: if, then, my son marries thee, and the world can be convinced it was against my consent, he alone will be blamed; and his youth, and your beauty, will plead his excuse. It is pretty well known I am good-natured: I shall not fail to appear very angry; but, at last, I shall be reconciled, and forgive all. You know what I mean, Marianne,' added she, smiling.

So much goodness deprived me of the power of answering her in any other language but that of extasy: I seized her hand, with which she happened to be holding one of the bars of the grate. I wept for joy: transported with gratitude and tenderness, I seemed besides myself. 'My dear, my kind, and indulgent mother,' cried I, 'how ravishing, how transporting, is this instance of your affection! O why have I but one heart! Is it possible that there is a mind on earth so generous, so disinterested?'

These raptures, though without the least connection, better expressed the undescribable transport of my mind that was overflowing with the warmest, the delightfulest sensations, than the most pathetick eloquence; and which my dear benefactress returned, with a look lively and penetrating; and, with an engaging smile.—'My dear Marianne,' said she, 'could you think that that laudable sincerity which makes you so very charming, could prejudice you in the opinion of a mother like me? Come, my dear, calm your transports.'—'Dear Madam,' returned I, as soon as I was a little more calm, 'is it possible, without knowing you, to form an idea of such goodness, such generous sentiments, as yours? If I was not accustomed to such surprizing marks of your regard for me, I should hardly believe the evidence of my senses.'—'Come, come, child; enough,' said she; 'take care of this parchment, here:' (this was the deed she had been speaking of) 'thou knowest not that, according to the date of this donation, the first quarter is due, and that I have brought it with me. Here it is,' added she, pulling a purse of louis d'ors out of her pocket,

et, which she forced me to take, though I refused it, and insisted upon her keeping it for me. 'It will be much safer in your hands than in mine,' said I: 'what should I do with it? Do you let me want any thing? Have I not every thing in abundance? I have yet the money by me which you gave me yourself, as well as that I received on the death of the lady who brought me up.'—'Pray, take it, however,' returned she; 'it is your own; and it is time you should be used to have money.'

We then heard the parlour-door open; on which I put the purse in my pocket; and immediately after entered the abbess of the convent. 'I heard you were here,' said she to Mrs. De Valville, with a whispering tone, (for I had told her of Mr. De Climal's death;) and I am come to have the honour of your company a moment: I intended to have sent to your house this afternoon, as I told Miss.' In fine, they had a short, but very serious conversation; which concluded, Mrs. De Valville arose.—'It will be some time before I see you again, Marianne,' said she; 'farewell!' Then, saluting the abbess, she left me, with a mind serene, and full of the highest satisfaction. What had I to fear? By what means could my happiness be wrested from me? Could there be a greater disaster than that I had just suffered, and from which I was come off victorious? No, certainly; for since Mrs. De Valville's kindness to me had been proof against the most powerful motives that were possible to cool her affection, and make her averse to our marriage, methought I could defy my adverse stars to hurt me. Her goodness had exhausted the source of all my troubles, and nothing could disappoint my joy, but the death of my mother, her son, or myself. I swam in delight; and said to myself.—'All my disasters are finished!' Methought that, as my first misfortunes were excessive, my happiness began in the same manner. 'I have not lost,' said I, 'perhaps, more happiness than I now recover: the mother, to whom I owe my life, would not have appeared more tender than that mother who has adopted me her daughter, nor would have left me a greater name than that I shall now receive.'

Mrs.

Mrs. De Valville kept her word; ten or twelve days passed without my seeing her; but she sent almost every day to the convent; and I received two or three letters from Valville, who had his mother's consent to write to me. It would be needless to repeat them all to you; besides, some of them were so long that you might think them tedious. Here follows only what I can remember of the first.

“YOU have betrayed me, dear Miss, to my mother; but I will punish you for it; for, instead of one or two letters, which I might, perhaps, have wrote to you, you may expect to receive a great many: in short, as many as I please. I desired you to mention neither the impertinence of Mrs. Du Tour, nor the ridiculous behaviour of Mrs. De Fare; but you were resolved to take no notice of my entreaties. You have a little stubborn heart, that is resolved to outdo me in frankness and generosity; but do you think you have injured me? Not at all: for, though I have not a heart so noble as yours, yet my mother is resolved to appear not less disinterested and generous; so, if I may claim any honour from her virtues, things are pretty equal between us. But stay till we are married; and then we shall find whether you have a greater mind than I: mean time, give me leave to boast, that I outdo you in tenderness. “Valville,” said my mother to me, “my daughter’s behaviour is incomparable; you recommended her to be secret, which I do not blame you for at all; but she has concealed nothing from me: I am charmed with her open and unreserved confidence, and love her a thousand times, if possible, better than ever I did. Confess, my son, she quite outdoes you.”

The rest of the letter was filled up with tender endearments; but this is all I remember of it. But to proceed. Ten or twelve days had passed since I heard from Mrs. De Valville; when, about ten in the morning, I was told that a relation of my mamma’s enquired for me, and was waiting in the parlour. As they had not told me whether she was old or young, I imagined it was Miss De Fare, who, ex-

cepting her mother, was the only relation of Mrs. De Valville’s that I knew; and I went down, fully persuaded it could be none but her: but I was quite mistaken; instead of her, I saw a tall, meagre, spare woman; her aspect was long and disagreeable, which rendered her mien cold and forbidding; her arms were long and flat, to which hung two lean and shrivelled hands, with fingers of an extraordinary length. I started at the sight of this apparition; imagined they had been mistaken, and thought it was another Marianne she wanted; for it was by the name of Marianne only that she enquired for me. “Madam,” said I, “I do not remember that I ever had the honour to know you; and it is probable it is not me that you asked for.”—“You must excuse me,” replied she; “but, to be more certain, I tell you, that the Marianne I want is a young orphan-girl, who, they say, knows neither her relations nor her family; she was some days apprentice to a linen draper, called Mrs. Du Tour; and, a few days ago, was carried by Mrs. De Fare to her country-house: she is Mrs. De Valville’s pensioner. Are not you she?”—“Yes, Madam,” returned I: “whatever is your intention in asking for me, I readily acknowledge that I am the person you describe, and have too much honour and sincerity ever to deny it.”—“Well said,” replied she; “you are very pretty; but, let me tell you, you carry your ambition a little too high. Farewel, my girl! this is all I wanted to know.” And then, without any farther compliment, she opened the parlour-door to go out.

Astonished at this singular behaviour, I stood at first immoveable; and then, recollecting myself, I called her back. “Madam,” cried I, “what do you mean by this visit? Are you a relation of Mrs. De Valville, as you said?”—“Yes, my jewel,” said she; “a near relation; and one that has a little more sense than she!”—“I do not know your designs, Madam,” replied I; “but it would be very ungenerous to come here to surprize and circumvent me.” To this she made no answer, but went down.

“What can this mean?” cried I to myself. “What can be the intention of a visit so extraordinary? Is there some

‘some new storm gathering over me?’  
 ‘Well, I cannot help it: there is something so mysterious in this, that I cannot penetrate it!’ On this, I returned to my chamber, in order to inform Mrs. De Valville of this new and unexpected accident; not that I thought there could be any crime in concealing it from her; for of what ill consequences could it be? I saw none: but, however indifferent it appeared to me, I should have reproached myself, if I had not made her my confidante. In short, I wrote to my benefactress immediately, and acquainted her with every particular; and the same day received an answer. ‘By the description of the lady you mentioned,’ returned she, in a short letter, ‘I guess who you mean; and to-morrow, in the afternoon, I will call to see you, and tell you who it is: make yourself easy.’ And, indeed, I was so; but this tranquillity was soon interrupted; and the calm and placid disposition of my mind changed into the most piercing grief and tormenting anxiety.

Between ten and eleven the next morning, a lay-sister entered my room; she was sent by the abbess to tell me that one of Mrs. De Valville’s maids was come to take me away in a coach, and that I must make haste to dress me: as nothing could be more positive, I instantly obeyed; and, in a short time, was ready, and went down stairs.

The maid, above-mentioned, was walking in the court, and appeared at the door as soon as it was opened to me. She was a woman of an agreeable appearance, pretty well dressed, with a behaviour suitable to her condition, and extremely ceremonious. I did not think I had the least reason to distrust her being Mrs. De Valville’s maid; I saw the coach she came in, which I thought was my mamma’s: it was, indeed, a little different from that I had always seen; but it was very natural to imagine she had more than one. ‘Madam,’ said the maid, after a dozen curtsies, ‘I am come to fetch you, for Mrs. De Valville waits for you.’—‘Is she going to dine abroad,’ said I, ‘and has a mind to take me with her? It is very early.’—‘No, Madam; it is not to go any where, I believe: I—I—I fancy, Madam, it is only to spend the day with you,

‘Madam,’ replied she, after hesitating a little, like a person that knew not what to answer; but that embarrassment was so short, that I did not take much notice of it, till it was too late. ‘Come, mistress,’ said I, ‘let us go;’ and stepped directly into the coach: I then observed that the coachman was a stranger to me, and that there was no footman.

The maid first placed herself opposite to me; but we were scarcely out of the court before she said—‘I cannot ride easy this way; you will give me leave to sit with you.’ I did not answer a word, though I thought her behaviour was instantly become very familiar. ‘Why,’ thought I, ‘does this woman take this liberty with me, who appear to be so much above her, and whom she ought to regard as her mistress’s friend? I am persuaded that this would not be agreeable to Mrs. De Valville.’ After this reflection, there arose in my mind another; I observed the coachman had not the same livery as my mother’s: then entered my mind the surprizing visit that had been made me by the relation of Mrs. De Valville. These considerations were attended with some inquietude.

‘What coachman is this?’ said I; ‘I never saw him at your mistress’s.’—‘It is not hers,’ returned she; ‘he belongs to a lady who is come to see her, that lent her her coach to fetch you from the convent.’ All this while we were driving on at a great rate; but I observed, I did not see the street in which Mrs. De Valville lived, which I knew very well. My inquietude augmented extremely, and my heart began to be in a painful palpitation; but yet I concealed my trouble, and accused myself of a ridiculous distrust. ‘Shall we be soon there?’ said I. ‘What way is the coachman carrying us?’—‘The shortest way,’ Madam,’ said she; ‘we shall be at home in a minute.’ I looked every way, but in vain; I could see nothing of the street in which my dear benefactress lived: and, while I was in this consternation, the coach suddenly entered a large gate which belonged to a convent. ‘Oh!’ cried I, terribly alarmed, ‘where have you brought me? Mrs. De Valville does not live here! You have deceived me.’ And immediately



mediately I heard the gate shut upon me, and the coach stopped in the middle of the court. My conductress said not a word; I changed colour; and doubted no longer that I had been deceived and imposed upon. 'You wretch!' cried I to the woman, 'where am I? What is your design?'—'No noise!' returned she: 'you will not be hurt; I shall leave you in a good place, you see. You are here by virtue of a superior authority; and might have been brought away in a manner that would have made more noise; but it was thought proper to do it more privately, and I was sent to deceive you, as I have done.'

While she spoke thus, they opened the door of the cloister, and I saw two or three nuns, who, with a smiling and friendly air, waited for my coming out of the coach to conduct me into the convent. 'Come, my dear,' come,' cried they; 'do not disturb yourself: you will not be sorry for being amongst us.' One of the lay-sisters came to the coach, where, with my head hanging down, I was shedding a torrent of tears. 'Come, Miss, will not you step down?' said she, presenting me her hand. 'Pray, help the lady,' added she to the woman who brought me thither. On which I got down: my grief almost deprived me of life; they were obliged to support me; and immediately delivered me into the hands of the nuns, pale, stunned, and weak, who conducted me to a neat room, where they placed me in an easy chair that stood by the table. There I remained silent, bathed in tears, and in a state of weakness and inactivity nearly resembling a swoon: my eyes were closed; and those young ladies spoke to me, exhorted me to take courage, and not to abandon myself to a fruitless grief; to which I was unable to make any answer but that of sighs and groans.

At last, I lifted up my head, and cast upon them an eager and distracted look: when one of the nuns, taking hold of my hand, and pressing it between hers—'Come, Miss, endeavour to recover yourself,' said she; 'do not suffer yourself to be alarmed with imaginary evils. Is it so great a misfortune to be brought hither, where every thing will conspire to make you easy and happy? We do

not know the subject of your afflictions; but, whatever it is, it can give no sufficient cause for you thus to depress your mind, and sink under such immoderate, such extravagant sorrow: you are not brought here to be deprived of life, but to live in a house where you will find more sweet repose and consolation than you can imagine, and where every thing will conspire to make life desirable. You will, perhaps, one day thank the Supreme Disposer of all things for what now appears so dreadful, so insupportable, to you. Come, endeavour to be patient, to be easy and calm. Are you not a Christian? Why, then, my dear daughter, do you carry your grief to despair? O Heavens! can any thing happen to us here below that will excuse our offending our Creator, and make us, without guilt, censure his superintending care? Why so many groans, so many tears? You may be sure nobody has any intention against you, that you ought to be afraid of. We were told a thousand advantageous things of you before we saw you: you were represented to be a lady of the best sense; let your conduct now shew that what they said of you was true. Your countenance shews that you have a mild and gentle disposition; and I assure you we are so prepossessed in your favour, that there is not one of us but loves you already: we all remarked to each other, that the sight of you inspired us with friendship; and, if the lady-abbess had not been indisposed, and in bed, she herself would have received you, for she is in the utmost impatience to see you. Do not, then, disappoint the good opinion that you have taught us to form of you: we are entirely innocent of your affliction; we only were desired to receive you; and we do it with hearts sensible of your charms, and full of a tender concern for your uneasiness.'

'Madam,' returned I, with a sigh, 'I do not accuse you with any thing; I return you—and these ladies—a thousand thanks for the obliging thoughts you entertain of me.' These few words were pronounced in a most plaintive and tender air. In our grief, the moving accents that flow  
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from us are peculiarly affecting, and their force almost irresistible. The nuns interested themselves in my concern, and all of them wept.

They then proposed my going to dinner; and insisted upon my eating something. I excused myself. 'It is unnecessary,' said I; 'I thank you, but I cannot eat.' However, it was presently determined that I should, at least, taste a little soup, which was brought me, with a light dinner, and a handsome dessert of fruit. I at first refused to touch it; but the nuns were so pressing, and their entreaties and behaviour so very obliging, that I could not, at last, avoid eating a little soup, and tasting the rest of the provisions, though I complied with some reluctance, and after a great many refusals.

At last they left me; and I grew a little more calm, though I saw no reason for consolation. The source of our tears is not inexhaustible: I had received a little nourishment; was affectionately caressed; and the dreadful consternation and despair to which I had just abandoned myself, insensibly abated; and my grief gave place to a melancholy sadness; my tears were stopped, and I fell into a deep and painful musing. 'From whence comes this sudden and unexpected misfortune?' said I to myself. 'What will my dear benefactress think of it? What will she do to find me again? Is not that ill-looking relation, that came to see me in the convent, the cause of every thing? But what methods have they taken to ruin me! What can be their design? Will my dear mamma succour me? And, supposing this, yet how will she be able to discover where I am? Will not Valville, my dear Valville! be prevailed upon to lose me for ever? Will not they bring him over to their party, and draw him in to consent to abandon me? Has not Mrs. De Valville consented to it? or will not she yield to the force of their reasons, and be prevailed upon to desert me, and withdraw her generous protection? They will never see me more; persons of the greatest authority intermeddle with my affairs; my history will become publick. Oh! there will be no more a

'Valville for me; perhaps, no more a mother!'

Thus did I entertain myself with my own melancholy ideas. The bell had called all the nuns who received me to the choir; and only one of the lay-sisters staid to keep me company, and was saying her chaplet, while I was making these painful reflections, which I sometimes softened with more sweet and comfortable thoughts. 'Can my mamma,' said I, 'who loves me so affectionately; whose heart is so tender and generous; who has hitherto been so immoveable, and has given me so many instances of her firmness and intrepidity; is it possible she can ever change? What did she not say to encourage me the last time she saw me? "I must finish my days with thee: I cannot live without thee, my child." And then Valville has a mind so sincere, so noble, so tender! Alas! to what distress am I exposed! What will this end in?'

These ideas passed successively in my mind, and were accompanied with the most deep and bitter sighs; while the lay-sister went on with her chaplet, sometimes shrugging up her shoulders, with an air expressive of pity and compassion; and sometimes interrupting her prayers to put up an ejaculation for me. 'Lord help us!' cried she. 'God give you the comfort you want!—Do thou, blessed God, dissipate her anxiety, and dispel every care from her mind!'

The nuns returned. 'Well, how do you do, my dear?' said one of them, addressing herself to me. 'Are you more composed and easy? Come, you have not seen our garden, which is a very fine one: the abbess desired us to shew it you; will you take a turn, Miss? Walking will divert and recreate your mind; we have the finest walks that can be imagined: then we will go and see the abbess, who is just up.'—'As you please, ladies,' returned I; and then followed them. We walked about three quarters of an hour, after which we went to the abbess's apartment: but those nuns stayed hardly a minute with me; they slipped out, one after another, till there were none left but the abbess and I.

This lady was of a great family, and seemed to have been a very agreeable woman.

woman. I never saw so much serenity and cheerfulness, mixed with an air of gravity and solemnity: and though she was in years, one did not readily observe it; for her countenance was one of those that appear rather ancient than old; one would think that time spares them; that their years do not lie heavy upon them, but slide away, and leave none but soft and slight wrinkles on their brows. She had an air of dignity, and a kind of monastick reserve; was tall, and remarkably neat; and, to form a just idea of her, you must imagine a person that appears with such a singular plainness and simplicity, as seems expressive of the disposition of her heart; and is a kind of image of it's purity, peace, satisfaction, and the sagacity of her thoughts.

As soon as I was alone with this lady, she desired me to sit down; and I took a chair—'They were much in the right,' added she, smiling, 'who told me, that at first sight you prejudice every body in your favour; and there is the greatest reason to believe that, with so much sweetness, you have a mind perfectly reasonable and considerate. All my nuns are charmed with you. Pray, how do you like being here?'—'I should like it very well, Madam,' replied I, 'had I been brought here without compulsion, and by my own choice; but I cannot help being astonished at such a surprising and unexpected proceeding, and being very uneasy to know the reason of it.'—'But do not you guess the reason?' returned she. 'Do not you suspect the cause?'—'No, Madam,' cried I; 'I have never injured any body.'—'Well, I will then inform you why it was done,' replied she; 'or, at least, what they told me was the cause, and what I am charged to let you know. There is a certain gentleman of fortune, that is, of one of the most considerable families, who is desirous of marrying you; all his relations are alarmed at it; and, in order to prevent it, they have thought proper to remove you from his sight; not because you want virtue and prudence; for in this they do you justice, and it is not on this account they oppose you: the only thing alledged against you, is your unknown extraction; every particular whereof is but too well known to you. Con-

sider, dear daughter, that you have a set of powerful relations, who will never suffer a marriage like this. Was merit a sufficient qualification, you would have reason to hope that you would be more agreeable to them than any other: but the world is not contented with that; however worthy you are of a general esteem, it would not prevent their being less ashamed at seeing you enter into their alliance; your good qualities would not render your husband at all more excusable; they would never forgive his taking a wife like you; and he would be, in the esteem of the publick, entirely ruined. I must confess, that it is a sad thing that the world should think thus; but, if we consider, we shall find they are not so much to blame as we may at first imagine. The difference of conditions is a most necessary thing in life, and absolutely requisite to keep up that harmonious irregularity which springs from the various dependences of mankind upon each other; and it could no longer subsist, all order would cease, if such unequal, and, without exaggeration, I may say, such monstrous marriages as yours, child, were tolerated; for, between you and I, let me remind you, in order to help you to hear reason, that you ought to reflect a little on the situation in which Providence has permitted you to be placed, and how very contemptible are your circumstances; and, at the same time, consider who it is that proposes to marry you; and then, pray, put yourself in their place: these reflections are all I desire of you.'

'Ah, Madam! I beg you would spare me here,' returned I, in that free and resolute tone we sometimes use when under the most violent grief: 'I assure you it is a subject on which I have no more reflections to make; no new humiliations to undergo. I know too well what I am: I have made no secret of my misfortunes; I have mentioned them to every one who has known me. I told my history to Mr. De Valville, who is the gentleman you speak of; I told it to my dear benefactress his mother; I have represented to her the various miseries of my life, in the strongest and most lively colours; and in a way most proper to discourage her: I have

drawn before her the most dreadful picture of my circumstances; and have not, Madam, left the least particular of it unmentioned. The disaster that happened to me from my very cradle, which was the fatal cause of my being now destitute of every relation, and unknown to my family; the compassion with which I inspired the hearts of some strangers, on a road where both my father and mother lay murdered before them; the charity and compassion that excited them to take me with them; the education that was given me by two pious persons, and the indigence and distress to which I was reduced at their death; the succour, or, if you will, the alms, I received from a gentleman who is dead too; for it is thus I have represented it, the better to describe my indigence, and make Mr. De Valville ashamed of his passion. What could they have desired more? I have not spared myself. I have, perhaps, said more than was strictly true, for fear they should think too favourably of me. There is not, perhaps, a person upon earth who would have had the cruelty to treat me so ill as I have done myself; and, after all I have so frankly acknowledged, it is not for me to search into the reasons why Mrs. De Valville and her son did not abandon me; it is sufficient to say that, so far from deceiving them, I have endeavoured to set myself in a light more mean and distressed than can be imagined; consequently nothing can be objected to me on that point, since I never could be degraded lower; and repetitions of the same things could only serve to make a girl, so unhappy, so afflicted, and so much to be pitied, sink under the excess of her grief. You, Madam, who are an abbess, and therefore make the strictest profession of religion, can only look upon me with humanity and compassion; and surely should refuse to join in the persecution I undergo from persons that impute to me, as a crime, a love of which it is not my fault if I have not cured Mr. De Valville. If men are puffed up with pride, it is not for a lady of your charitable and pious disposition to soothe and flatter their vanity; and if I have great merit, as you are pleased to

say, (which I am neither bold nor conceited enough to believe) you must think I want no accomplishment. Mr. De Valville, who is a gentleman that knows the world, desires no more. His mother, a lady universally loved and esteemed, who has a rank to keep up as well as those who would injure me, and who is no more fond of disgrace than they, is not ashamed to love me; nor less difficult to be pleased than her son; the mother and the son think both alike: ought I, then, to oppose them? ought I to refuse what they offer me, especially when I have given them my heart? and when it is neither their wealth nor their superior stations, but only their tendernefs, I value, which is infinitely dearer to me than every thing else. Besides, are they not their own masters? Do not they know what they do? Am not I sensible that they do me too much honour? I can be taught nothing on that point, Madam; therefore let us mention it no more. Be only so kind as to tell me now, who are the persons that brought me hither; what they mean by this extraordinary step; and what pretence they have for treating me to-day with so much violence?

‘My dear child,’ returned the abbess, with a look of friendship and concern, ‘was I in Mrs. De Valville’s place, I believe I should think as she does. I even approve of your reasons; but do not mention that I say so.’ Upon this I took her hand and kissed it. She seemed, methought, to be pleased and touched with this sudden emotion; and, after a moment’s pause, resumed—‘I have been very far from having any intention to increase your uneasiness; I have only spoken thus because I was desirous to do it before you came hither. I did not imagine you to be what you are; you are far superior to the ideas I before had formed of you: I expected to find you had beauty, and, perhaps, some wit; but I did not think of finding either the solidity of judgment, the charms, and much less the character, which I begin to conceive an opinion of. You are worthy of Mrs. De Valville’s tendernefs; and her complaisance for the sentiments of her son is, indeed, truly noble. I do not know that lady; but her conduct



‘ dust towards you gives me a high opinion of her; for she cannot but be a lady of the greatest merit. I beg you would not mention what I tell you. I must repeat this request,’ added she, seeing me weep out of gratitude; ‘ but let me proceed to the rest. You are brought here by virtue of a superior authority; and what I am charged to propose to you is, to determine either to stay in our house; that is, to take the veil; or to consent to another marriage. I confess that I sincerely wish the first may be agreeable to you: I wish it as much for your sake as my own; for mine, because the receiving a person like you would give me a great deal of pleasure; for yours, because you are lovely; and, in this world, such beauty as yours always exposes a person, though perfectly virtuous, in proportion as it is dangerous to the repose of others. But here you would dwell in perfect security; happy yourself, and without any danger of interrupting the felicity of any man. What greater advantage can you ever derive from your charms, than to consecrate them to Him who gave them you; from whom you will never meet with that infidelity and contempt which you have reason to fear from men, and even from your husband himself? Beauty is often the cause of the cruellest misfortunes, the greatest calamities, that attend human nature; and even the destruction of soul and body. You think, perhaps, I talk like a nun, and that I am going to preach to you: very far from it; what I say, is only the voice of reason, the language of truth, and which the daily experience of mankind in all ages will justify. But this I only say out of my zeal for your happiness. These are the two things I have promised to propose to you; and to-night they will come to know your answer. Consult with yourself, my dear child; think what answer I must make for you: for they desire you would explain yourself on each of these points, on pain of being removed to-morrow morning far from Paris. Tell me, then, will you be a nun? or had you rather be married?’

‘ Alas, mother, I can consent to neither!’ replied I. ‘ I am not in a state in which it can be my duty to

‘ consecrate myself to the service of Heaven, in the manner they propose; nor can you yourself advise me to offer a heart full of tenderness, full of the softest passions for a human object, to the perpetual contemplation of the Deity alone: it now entertains no views, but such as are innocent and lawful; but they would cease to be so as soon as I had taken the veil. Heaven preserve me from entering into such engagements as will be impossible for me ever to fulfil! As I am not happy enough to be able to give my consent to it with a pure conscience, so I am not desperate enough to think, without horror, of deliberately offending my Almighty Friend, by such an audacious piece of mockery, such an abominable mixture of impiety and presumption. As for the marriage they propose, the same reasons, I am persuaded, will hold good, and ever influence me so far as not to permit me to consent to it: however, let them give me time to consider of it.’—‘ They will give you none,’ interrupted the abbess: ‘ this is an affair they are resolved to conclude with the utmost haste; you must either consent to be married in a very few days, or submit to leave Paris, and be carried I do not know whither. And I would advise you to promise to marry the man they propose to you, on condition they will permit you to see him first, that you may have an opportunity of being satisfied how you like him; and of being informed what it is natural you should desire to know of his extraction, circumstances, and character; and that you be granted the privilege of speaking with those who would persuade you to accept of him for your husband. These are things which I think they cannot refuse you, however desirous they are of dispatching the affair. By this means you will gain time; and who knows what may happen during that interval?’—‘ You are in the right,’ Madam,’ I returned with a deep sigh; ‘ but, alas! this is a very small resource; however, I consent, provided they grant what you have just mentioned: perhaps some favourable event may unravel their design, and deliver me from the persecutions I suffer.’

Here a nun entered, and told the abbess

bees that she was expected in the parlour. 'May be it is on your account,' daughter,' said she; 'I suspect it is your answer they are come for: but let it be what it will, I shall soon return. Pray, my dear, believe I am very much your friend; and I hope you do not doubt it.' On this she left me, and I returned into the room where I had dined; which I entered with my heart dejected and oppressed with grief. Nobody, I am sure, could have known me again: my mind was disordered, and I was almost ready to sink under the discouraging prospect that lay before me. I was very near an hour in this state of mind, when I heard my door open. They came in: I looked to see who it was, or rather stared; and, stupid with pondering on my misery, I remained silent. They spoke; but I heard them not. 'What! what would you have?' was all they could draw from me: at last, they repeated so often that the abbess wanted me, that I arose up and went to her.

'I was not deceived,' said she, as soon as she saw me at a distance coming towards her; 'it was on your account I was called: and I have an extreme good opinion of your affairs, and do not doubt but they will conclude very happily. I said you had accepted of the marriage; and tomorrow, about noon, they will send a coach to carry you to a house where you will see your intended husband, and the persons who propose him to you. I have used my utmost endeavours to procure you the reception you deserve, and that regard which I hope they will have for you: put your trust, my dear, in that Being whose providence is able to over-rule all events, and make the most cloudy, the most gloomy, scene to brighten up, and give place to a pleasing return of peace and joy; blessings to which these misfortunes will add a double relish. Have recourse to him, and he will not abandon you. I should freely have offered to inform Mrs. De Valville that you are here; but, how agreeable soever it would be to me to oblige you, it is a service I am not permitted to render you: they have made me promise not to intermeddle in your affairs; I have given

them my word that I will not; and I am very sorry for it.'

A nun, who then entered, interrupted our discourse. I went into the garden, something less dejected than when I came in. I distinguished my ideas a little more clearly. I laid down some rules for my conduct in the house to which I was to be carried the next day. I meditated upon what I should say; and I found my reasons so irresistible, that I thought it impossible but they must acknowledge their force, if they would but condescend to hear me. It is true, the little schemes we draw beforehand, in such cases, are often useless; since it is the various and almost infinite turns which are given to things, that ought to direct what should be our words, and what our actions: but these sort of preparations are not altogether useless; they amuse and comfort us; we delude the time that would otherwise be spent in anxious inquietude, by flattering ourselves with the thoughts of gaining our cause while we are pleading it; and this is very natural to us. A variety of other thoughts crowded into my mind. 'There is some distance,' said I to myself, 'from this convent to the house whither they are to carry me. Oh, Heaven! if thou wouldst but permit Valville, or his mother, to meet the coach I shall be in, they would not fail to make the coachman stop: and if those who conduct me will not suffer them to do it, I will cry out and struggle, and make such a noise, that my mother or my lover may easily follow me, and know whither I am carried.' What wild thoughts enter our minds on such occasions! There is no chimera, however agreeable or dreadful, which will not readily find a place in our imaginations. 'But supposing I should meet my mother or her son,' thought I again, 'am I sure they would not shut their eyes, and seem not to know me? Have not they consented to my being carried away? May not their relations, by their remonstrances, entreaties, and reproaches, have prevailed upon them to retract their word? The maxims and customs of the world are much against me; great sentiments are difficult to support; and the pride of mankind loads me with contempt, and is offended at my misery.'

'sery.' On this I renewed my tears, and a moment after flattered myself again. But I had like to have forgot one article; which was, that at night, when I entered my chamber, after having taken a turn in the garden, I saw my box (for I had yet no other furniture) in a chair, which they had brought from the other convent. You cannot easily conceive with what new trouble this unexpected object struck me; I do not think my being carried away gave me so great a consternation, or so perfectly shocked me. 'Well,' cried I, 'are they then so much in earnest?' I had not yet reflected that I wanted my cloaths; and, had I thought of it, I should have gone through any extremity rather than have asked for them. However, I no sooner saw them but I imagined that there was no remedy for my misfortunes. 'What! even my cloaths are brought here! There is, then,' I cried, 'no resource!' You would have thought, had you seen me, that every thing else was nothing in comparison of this: the frightful box cleared up every thing, sunk my courage, and made me lose all my hopes. 'Now,' said I, 'every thing is determined; every body is united against me; this is bidding an eternal adieu: and it is certain that my dear benefactress and her son have joined the party.'

Pray, Madam, do not enquire why I formed this rash and positive consequence, since twenty pages would hardly be sufficient to explain it to you: it was not my reason, but only my grief, that drew these conclusions. In such a situation of mind as I was then in, things of the smallest importance, at the first sight, appear dreadful, and fill the heart with uneasiness; and a soul previously disposed to fear, always considers them in that light. They had sent me my cloaths, and would therefore break off all correspondence with me, and never see me more. How very natural was this conclusion for one in my unhappy circumstances, oppressed with the keenest grief, and ready to catch at any thing that would plunge me deeper in despair? But had I been capable of reasoning coolly, I should at once have perceived that it was a thing of no consequence. As I was removed from one house to another, my cloaths, to be sure, ought to follow me; and

thus I should have reasoned, had I been capable of reasoning at all.

However, I passed a very uneasy night; and my heart beat with the most violent palpitation all the next morning. The coach which the abbess had mentioned, was in the court exactly at the time proposed: I was told it waited for me. I went down trembling; and the first object that presented, on opening the door, was the woman who had seduced me from my own convent, and brought me to this. I saluted her with an air of indifference, and stepped into the coach. 'Good-morrow, Miss Marianne,' said she: 'you do not much care for seeing me; I assure you I am not at all in fault; so I am not to be blamed. However, I don't think you have any reason to be displeased at all this: I wish I was in your place. Indeed, I am neither so young nor so handsome as you; and that is all the difference between us.'—'Do you know, then, any thing of my affairs?' returned I. 'Aye, a little,' said she; 'I have heard a word dropped here and there: they say you have a mind to marry a man of a great family, and a swingeing fortune. An't it true?'—'It is something like it,' said I. 'Well,' continued she, 'unless you have taken a fancy to the young gentleman, I don't think you have any great reason to complain. They say you have neither father nor mother; and that nobody knows who you are, nor where you came from: and, between you and I, what can any body come to in such circumstances? I think one could only expect to be a beggar about the streets; a great many in your case are so: however, you are neither better nor worse for that. It is true, they take from you a sweetheart who is too great a gentleman ever to be your husband: but, to make you amends, they give you another, a clever young fellow, on my word! and such a one as any good tradesman's daughter might jump at. I am sure I shall never meet with such a one, though I have got a father and mother, and an uncle and aunt, and cozens, and all the relations in the 'verfal world: you are vastly luckily; and, for certain, must have been wrapped in your mother's smock. I'd have you to think I don't

‘ don’t speak more than I know; for I  
 ‘ have seen your husband that is to be,  
 ‘ and a proper handsome young man  
 ‘ he is; I believe he is about seven or  
 ‘ eight and twenty years old: I don’t  
 ‘ know how rich he is; but he has great  
 ‘ folks for his friends, and such as that;  
 ‘ and, if he has nothing now, he will cer-  
 ‘ tainly come to preferment. I don’t  
 ‘ say but he may be happy with you;  
 ‘ and be as well for you as if he had  
 ‘ made you a settlement.’—‘ But do  
 ‘ not you know,’ interrupted I, ‘ whi-  
 ‘ ther you are carrying me, and who I  
 ‘ am to speak to?’—‘ Yes,’ replied  
 ‘ she, ‘ they are very great folks; you  
 ‘ will be in good hands: we are going  
 ‘ to Mrs. De \*\*\*\*; she is a relation  
 ‘ of your first lover.’

You will be surprized, Madam, to  
 hear that the lady she mentioned was  
 no less a person than the prime-mini-  
 ster’s wife; and that I was to appear  
 before him: you will judge by this  
 how powerful were the enemies I had to  
 deal with; and that the least glimpse of  
 hope disappeared, and left me nothing  
 to enable me to support my misfor-  
 tunes.

I told you that I flattered myself  
 with fancying Mrs. De Valville and  
 her son might perhaps meet me in the  
 way: but had this improbable circum-  
 stance happened, it could have been of  
 no service to me; for I was no sooner  
 in the coach but the maid drew the cur-  
 tains before the glasses; a precaution  
 which she had probably received orders  
 to take; so that it was impossible for  
 me either to see or be seen. We soon  
 arrived, and stopped at a back-door,  
 which opened into a large garden, which  
 we went through; at the end thereof she  
 desired me to sit on a bench, in a private  
 alley near the house, till she returned  
 to let me know whether it was time  
 for me to appear. Scarce had I sat half  
 a quarter of an hour alone, when I saw  
 coming towards me a woman of above  
 forty-five or fifty years old, who seem-  
 ed to belong to the family; and who,  
 addressing me with the air of a low se-  
 cond-hand politeness, said—‘ Do not  
 ‘ be impatient, Madam: Mr. De \*\*\*\*  
 ‘ is engaged in a private conversation  
 ‘ with some persons; and you shall be  
 ‘ called for as soon as he has done.’  
 Then from an alley that opened into  
 that where I was seated, came a young  
 man of about twenty-eight or thirty

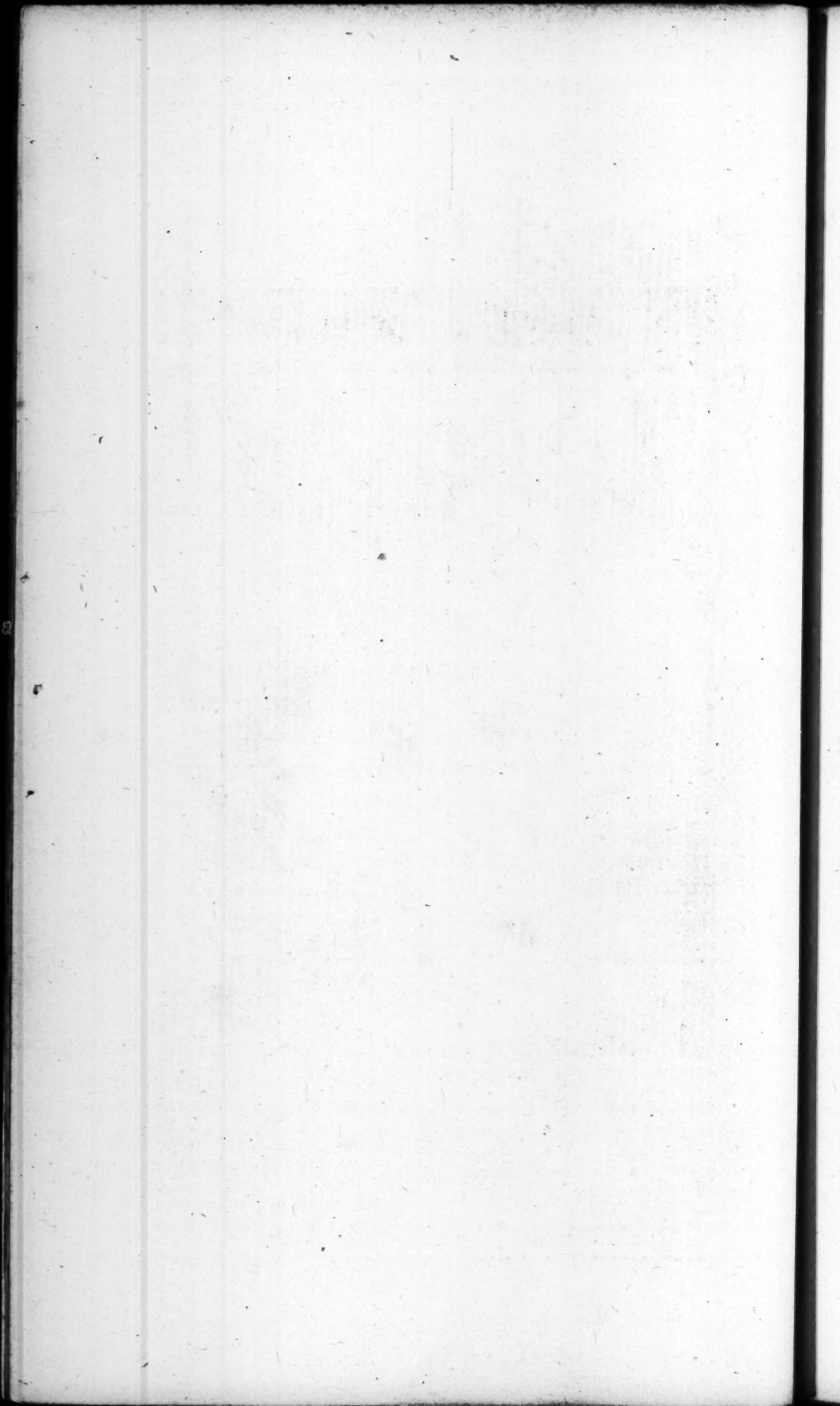
years old, with a person pretty agree-  
 able, and dressed in a plain but neat  
 manner; who bowed, and seemed going  
 to retire; when the woman, calling him  
 back—‘ Sir! Sir!’ said she; ‘ I have  
 ‘ not time to stay with this lady; pray,  
 ‘ keep her company till she is called:  
 ‘ I believe it will be no disagreeable  
 ‘ commission for you.’—‘ I am very  
 ‘ sensible of it,’ returned he; ‘ and am  
 ‘ very much obliged to you for it;’  
 drawing near, with an air more cour-  
 teous than gallant. ‘ Now, Madam,  
 ‘ I will leave you,’ said she: ‘ this gen-  
 ‘ tleman is, at least, one of your friends,  
 ‘ or else I would not go; his company,  
 ‘ I am sure, will be more agreeable to  
 ‘ you than mine.’ This said, she left  
 us. ‘ What can all this mean?’ said I  
 to myself: ‘ there is something myste-  
 ‘ rious in this!’ The young man ap-  
 peared at first pretty much confused,  
 and out of countenance: he sat down  
 by me, after another bow; which I re-  
 turned with the utmost coldness.

‘ It is charming weather,’ said he:  
 ‘ this alley is quite delightful; it is as  
 ‘ pleasant here as in the country.’—  
 ‘ Yes!’ returned I; and then the con-  
 versation dropped; for I was not in a  
 disposition to go on with it. He seem-  
 ed, at first, at a loss how to resume it;  
 and the only way he could think of  
 was, to pull out his snuff-box, and  
 present it to me open. ‘ Do not you  
 ‘ take snuff, Miss?’ said he. ‘ No,’  
 ‘ Sir,’ returned I: then followed ano-  
 ther silence; and he did not know what  
 to say. The monosyllables I made use  
 of in my answers, gave him no assis-  
 tance, and did not at all help to keep up  
 the conversation. I coughed. ‘ Have  
 ‘ you got a cold, Miss?’ said he. ‘ This  
 ‘ weather is very apt to give people  
 ‘ colds: yesterday it was cool, and to-  
 ‘ day it is pretty hot. These varia-  
 ‘ tions of the weather are not at all  
 ‘ healthful.’—‘ Very true, Sir,’ said  
 I. ‘ For my part,’ returned he, ‘ I  
 ‘ am not subject to these colds: let  
 ‘ the weather be what it will, my lungs  
 ‘ are never affected; nothing hurts me.’  
 —‘ That is well,’ replied I. ‘ As for  
 ‘ you, Miss,’ resumed he, ‘ whether  
 ‘ you have a cold or no, you look as  
 ‘ healthy as possible; and are as hand-  
 ‘ some as any body I ever saw.’—  
 ‘ You are very obliging, Sir,’ returned  
 I. ‘ It is very true, indeed, Miss,’ re-  
 plied he: ‘ Paris is very large; but  
 ‘ there





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‘there are certainly very few who can boast of having a form like yours, nor of being possessed of so many charms.’—‘Sir, these are compliments,’ said I, ‘that I do not merit; I make no pretensions to beauty: and, if you please, you may chuse some other topick.’—‘I only mention what I cannot help being a witness of,’ replied he; ‘and there is nobody, if in my place, that would not say as much, and more too: you ought not to be displeased at a discourse which is impossible for you to hinder, any more than you can help giving occasion for it; unless you would hide yourself from the world; and that would be a great pity, for it is certain there is not a lady more worthy to be admired. And, for my part, I esteem myself very happy in having seen you; and should even be much more so; if this favourable opportunity should procure me the felicity of seeing you again, and offering you my service.’—‘To me, Sir!’ cried I, with some amazement, ‘who have met you here only by chance; and who, according to all appearance, shall never see you again?’—‘Why will you never see me again?’ returned he. ‘It shall be just as you will; it entirely depends upon you: if my person is not altogether disagreeable to you, I foresee this meeting will be followed by many others. You may, if you please, render this an eternal acquaintance: there is nothing that I wish so much for; and it is a sincere inclination I have for you, prompts me to tell you so. True, I have not had the happiness to see you till this moment; nor have I, till now, seen so much beauty: and, since we are upon this subject, I will take the liberty to assure you, that the utmost of my wishes center in my desire of rendering myself agreeable to you, and arriving at the possession of so many unexpected charms.’—‘How, Sir!’ returned I, not willing to make any reply to such awkward and uncouth declarations of love; ‘did not you expect to meet with so many charms? What! did you know you should find me here, then?’—‘Yes, Madam,’ replied he: ‘to keep you no longer in suspense, I am the man Mrs. Kitty mentioned in the coach, as she has since told me.’—‘What,

‘Sir! you,’ cried I, ‘the husband proposed for me!’—‘Yes, Madam,’ said he; ‘you see I was in the right, when I said our acquaintance would last a great while, if it were not your fault.’ That is the reason that I walked in the garden, and was left here with you, in order to procure me an opportunity of conversing with you: they told me I should see a very amiable young lady; but you far exceeded their description; and I find I shall be induced to marry out of a most tender passion, where I only expected to do it out of interest and convenience. Yes, Miss, indeed I love you; I am charmed with your perfections: and it was this passion that made me appear so perplexed at seeing you first. Though I have been in company with a great many ladies, I never was in love before; but you are more handsome than all the others together: and it is your place now to consider whether you accept of me or not. As for the rest, Miss, you may enquire about my temper and character; I am sure you will hear a good account of them; for I am neither a gamester nor a debauchee: I value myself upon being a sober, regular man; and, though I am a bachelor, my chief view is to get preferment; and I shall not be worse when I am married, for a wife and family make a man a good economist. As to my present circumstances, they are not, indeed, very considerable: my father was fond of his pleasures, and lived a little too fast; and that, you know, is not the way to enrich a family. Besides, I have a brother and sister; I am the eldest, indeed; but yet there are three portions to be paid instead of one: however, I shall have something in hand on account of our marriage; but this I do not lay any great stress upon. The chief point is, that I am now in the possession of a very good place, and have the promise of a better, which will be given me as soon as our marriage-contract shall be signed: not to mention what I have saved these three years past out of the perquisites of a small employment, which will soon be changed for one much more considerable and profitable. So you see, by means of the great friends I have, we shall soon be

in very easy circumstances: but Mr. De \*\*\*\*, the prime-minister, will inform you more particularly of this himself; for I tell you nothing, my dear, but what is true," added he, taking hold of my hand, in order to kiss it. Here, Madam, my pride took the alarm, and my heart could not help swelling a little. "Softly, Sir!" said I, withdrawing my hand with a disgust that I was unable to dissemble; "pray, do not be so forward; I cannot admit of any freedoms: we have not yet settled matters. Who are you, pray, Sir?"—"Who am I, Miss!" returned he, vexed and confused: "I have the honour to be the son of the minister's lady's nurse; we sucked the same milk, and so she is my foster-sister. I am no less a person, I assure you! My mother has a pension from her; my sister is really her head-chambermaid: she loves us all; and is desirous of making my fortune. This is the person you speak to, Miss. Can there be any thing in this that shocks you? Does not the proposal please you?"—"I have no thoughts of marrying yet, Sir," said I. "Perhaps the reason is because I am not agreeable to you."—"No, Sir," replied I; "if I ever marry any one, I must, at least, love him first; and I do not find that I love you yet: I do not know what I may do."—"So much the worse; it is my misfortune," said he: "but I would not have you think it would be any difficulty for me to get a wife; it is not quite eight days since I had one recommended to me, who will have a good deal of money when her aunt dies; and has, besides, a father and mother."—"And I, Sir," I returned, "am an orphan; and you would do me too much honour."—"I do not say that, Miss," replied he; "nor did I ever think so: but, truly, I never thought you would have shewn such contempt for me; I imagined you would have considered a little better on it, on account of your present circumstances, which are dreadful enough, and not very favourable to your being settled in the world. Excuse me for being so plain with you; I mention it purely out of friendship: you must be sensible that there are some opportunities in life which we ought not to let slip; especially when we meet with peo-

ple not over-scrupulous in these points, and so little difficult as I. With respect to marriage, there is hardly any body but is desirous of entering into a family: I am willing to dispense with it; and this, I think, ought to be considered."—"Sir," returned I, with a gesture full of indignation, "you entertain me with very pretty discourse; nor is your love less polite! Pray, leave that subject."—"Mightywell, Madam! As you please," returned he, rising: "I shall be neither better nor worse; and, begging your pardon, you have no reason for being so proud. If it be not you, I cannot help it; it must be another: they thought this was doing you rather a very great favour, than any harm. You have beauty, indeed, which I do not at all dispute, and which has happened to hit my fancy; but, for all that, I do not know who will be the greatest loser: I should have made no difficulty of marrying you, though you have nothing; I should have loved and esteemed you not at all the less for it. But, since it does not please you, I will take my leave of you, Miss; and remain your very humble servant!"—"Your servant," Sir! said I. Upon this, he took two or three steps, as if going; and then, coming up to me again—"But, Miss," said he, "I consider you are alone; and if my company will be of any service to you, till you are called for, I shall do myself the honour to offer it you."—"I give you many thanks," I replied, with the tears in my eyes; not because he was going to leave me, but to see myself exposed to such mortifying adventures. "I hope, Miss, I am not the cause of those tears," added he: "I have said nothing that could possibly make you uneasy."—"No, no, Sir," I replied; "I do not at all complain of you: you need not give yourself the trouble to stay; for here comes the person that brought me hither." And, indeed, I saw Mrs. Catharine coming to us. I believe he did not care to have her a witness of the indifferent reception I had given to his love; for he immediately retired through another alley, that he might not meet her.

"Hey-day! what, has Mr. Villot left you?" said she. "Have you dismissed him?"—"No," returned I; "we parted,



'ed, because we saw you coming, and had nothing farther to say to each other.' — 'Well, Mrs. Marianne,' replied she, 'how do you like him? Is not he a clever, genteel spark? You find I did not impose upon you. You could not expect to have done better, had you never been in such wretched circumstances: but come, let us be going,' added she; 'they wait for us.' I then followed her, with a mind extremely disturbed, and a heart filled with the keenest anguish. We crossed several spacious rooms, and came at last to a large hall, where a company of footmen were waiting. At the same time, I observed two gentlemen discoursing at a window; one of whom appeared to be about twenty-four or twenty-five years old, and had a presence extremely noble; the other was a little older, and had the air of an officer. 'Stay a moment,' said the woman who conducted me, 'while I go to tell them that you are here.' She then went into another room, and returned a minute after: but, during this short interval, the young gentlemen had broke off their conversation, and turned to look upon me with an extreme attention; which, notwithstanding the acutest torment of mind, and most sensible distress, I could not help taking notice of: when I heard the youngest say to the other, with a tone of admiration and surprise—'Did you ever see any thing so lovely?' At this, I cast down my eyes, and turned away my head. This was a little accidental comfort, which I could not help tasting, though it did not divert my melancholy; like a sweet flower whose agreeable odour salutes us as we pass along; which, though it refreshes the senses, leaves the mind as it found it. In whatever afflictions we are plunged, our vanity almost always performs it's office; it hardly ever lies dormant; it is so natural to our sex, and so foreign to whatever else concerns us, that it remains the same, and supports itself amidst every affliction.

The maid returned, and desired me to walk in; on which the gentlemen followed me. I found there five or six ladies, and four gentlemen, two of whom belonged to the law, another to the army, and the fourth, the maid told me, was the prime-minister him-

self. His age rendered him venerable; he was tall, and well made; had a majestic mien, and a countenance that immediately inspired every one with confidence; calmed the troubled mind, and was a kind of pledge of the goodness that reigned within, and the justice that with an impartial hand he always distributed: time had not made him look old, nor given him the infirmities which embitter the decline of life; it had only spread over his looks an inexpressible something, that immediately filled the mind with a respectful awe. It was a countenance that was so agreeable to look upon, that one forgot his age, and was pleased to feel the veneration it inspired: even his healthful ruddy complexion had something extremely venerable in it; and appeared less the effect of temperance, than the fruit of wisdom, and the happiness of a serene and tranquil mind. The mildness of his sentiments shone in his face, and his soul painted there it's own honest, plain, and amiable portrait. The charms of virtue and integrity have no age; they never decay; but are the most splendid ornaments of every station. Such was the minister before whom I appeared: he had, in his manner of governing, a merit peculiar to himself, which had been hitherto unknown.

We have had some ministers whose names our historians have rendered immortal; they were, indeed, great men; but, during their administration, their first care was always to gain the affections of the people, to render them attentive to their actions, and to make themselves esteemed as the deepest politicians; they were always thought to be surrounded with impenetrable mysteries, and were pleased to find great things were expected from them; and that, in the most difficult and intricate affairs, it was thought they would manage with a masterly hand, even before they had undertaken to do it: this was an opinion which flattered their vanity; an artifice which their great successes rendered very excusable.

On the contrary, our minister governed according to the maxims of the truly wise: his conduct was mild, simple, without ostentation; and, with respect to himself, entirely disinterested: he thought of being useful, never of being loaded with praises; he did great actions from the single consideration of

the good of his country, and not from the glory that attended them. Contented and satisfied with his own skill and abilities, he did not raise the expectations of the multitude before-hand, or seek their applause afterwards by industriously publishing his success: he did not distinguish his most noble and praise-worthy actions from the most common and trivial part of his conduct; and, whatever labour and toil they cost him in private, in public they were much the same. A genius void of all pageantry set bounds to his conduct, while it hid the capacity that managed every thing, that exerted itself for the public good, regardless of his own; for when that was secured, the other he knew must be established on the most solid basis, and he share in the general happiness. The multitude reaped the fruit of his labour with more satisfaction than surprize; and persons of reflection alone formed a right judgment of the simplicity and plainness of his conduct. Thus to surmount difficulties almost unsurmountable; to remedy inconveniences almost remediless; to procure a glory, an advantage, a benefit to his country; to tame an enemy that attacked him, whom his natural mildness, the intricacies of the time, or the modesty of his administration, had emboldened: all these things he performed in that discreet, smooth, plain, and easy manner, with which he did every thing else. His measures were so secret, so still and imperceptible, and he was so little ambitious of gaining the esteem he merited, that one might forget to praise him, though all his actions were laudable. He was like a father, by whose industry and care his children are contented, happy, and in good esteem: he boasts not to them of all the pains they cost him, because he does not desire their encomiums; while they, on their side, do not observe the trouble he gives himself on their account, and make him no other return than that of their sincere affection. When this is the character of a minister, he must be looked upon with veneration and the highest respect: he is no amusement for persons of a prying, inquisitive disposition; but only inspires his fellow-subjects with confidence and tranquillity. As to foreigners, they looked upon him as a man who loved justice, and from whom they

could expect to gain nothing by deviating from it. He taught them to regulate their ambition, and to fear nothing from his. Happy is the king who has so sincere a friend, and who knows how to value him as he ought! and happy the people who have so noble, so disinterested, a patriot!

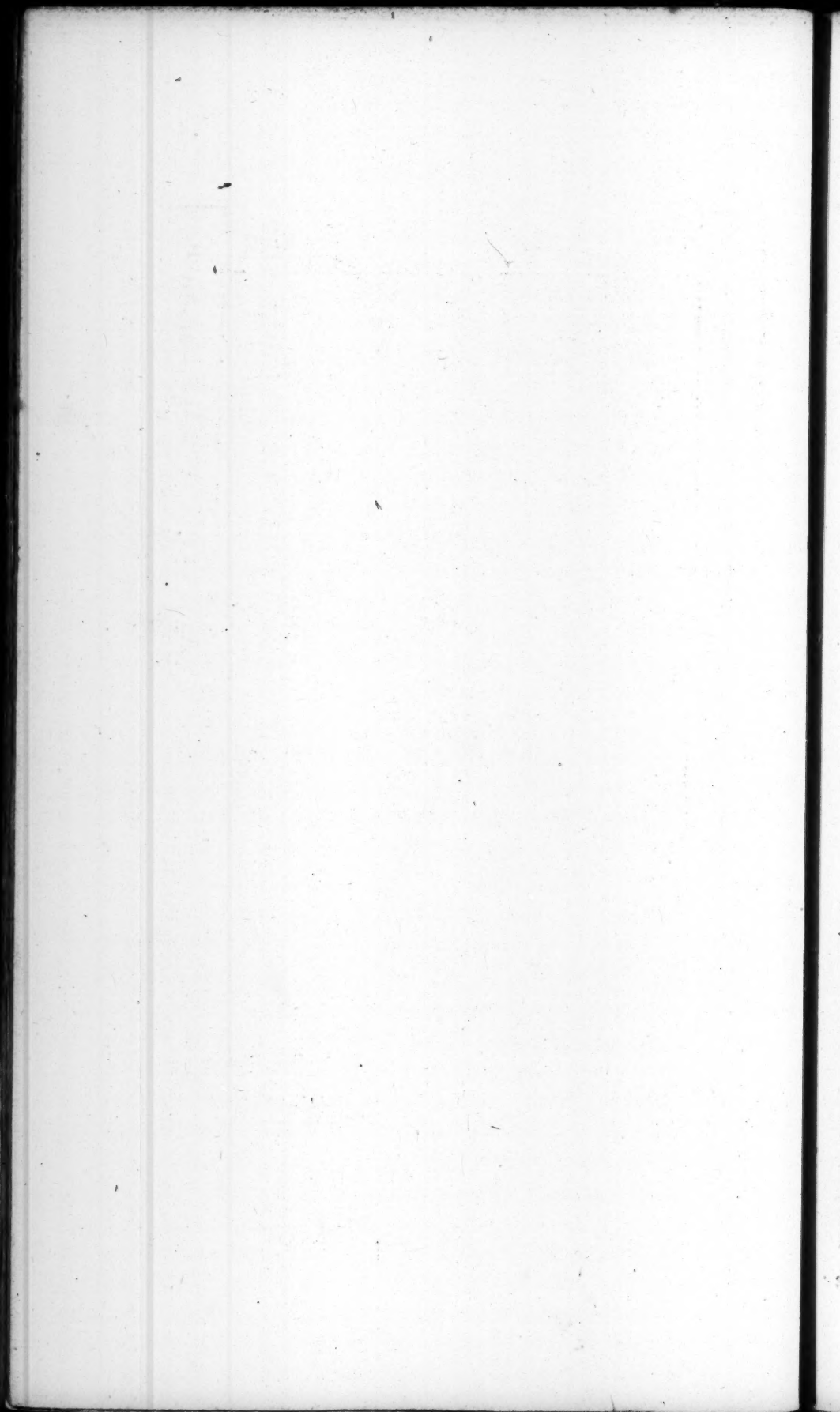
I believe, Madam, you cannot forbear smiling to hear me talk so like a politician: but if I have been too large in this part of his character, you will excuse me; since I only tell you what every body then said of him. But to return: we are now in his presence.

Among all the persons that surrounded me, some seemed to look upon me out of curiosity, while others did it with a sneer, and an air of disdain: these last I soon found were Valville's relations. I forgot to tell you, that the son of the lady's nurse, my destined husband, was there, who stood by the door with a servile and timorous countenance.

I was at first very much disconcerted at the sight of so much company, but soon recovered myself, and resumed my presence of mind. Amidst such extreme discouragements we are apt to fear nothing; besides, I was conscious of my own innocence, and that they alone were guilty in unjustly persecuting me: I loved Valville; they wrested him from me; and, methought, I had nothing more to fear. The most formidable authority loses all its awe and veneration when it is made to oppress the innocent.

The minister looked upon me with a smile of affability: 'She is perfectly amiable! and Valville is very excusable,' said he, addressing himself to one of the ladies, who was his wife. 'Yes, she is very pretty; she would do well enough for a mistress,' replied another lady, in a malicious and ill-natured tone. At this discourse I only gave her a look full of contempt. 'Come, softly!' said the minister to her; then addressing himself to me—'Come near, Miss,' added he: 'they say Mr. de Valville loves you; is it true that he intends to marry you?'—'At least he told me so, Sir,' said I. At this two or three of the ladies burst into a loud and scornful laughter: I again only cast a cold and careless glance at them; while Mr. De \*\*\*\* made a sign with his hand to engage them







them to be silent. 'You are an orphan, and know not who you are,' refused he. 'That is very true, Sir,' returned I. 'Well,' added he, 'do yourself justice, then; and resolve to think no more of this marriage: I can never consent to it; but I will make it up to you, and take you under my care. There is a young man, who is a very suitable match for you: he is an honest lad; and I shall take care to promote him. I would have you marry him; I hope you consent to it.'—'I do not design to marry at all, Sir,' returned I; 'and I entreat you would not press me any more to it: this, Sir, is my final resolution.'—'Well, I will give you four and twenty hours to think of it,' said he: 'they shall take you back to the convent; and I will send again for you to-morrow. Do not be refractory; for you must see Mr. de Valville no more; I will take care of that.'—'I shall never alter my mind, Sir,' said I; 'I can never think of marrying a man that has reproached me with my misfortunes: so you may now resolve what to do with me; for it will be to no purpose to make me come hither again.'

Scarce had I finished these last words, when word was brought that Valville and his mother were coming, and who immediately entered the room. Judge of their surprize and mine. 'What, my daughter! thou here!' cried Mrs. De Valville. 'O mother!' cried Valville, with his eyes sparkling with joy; 'it is she herself!'

Their relations had not the least suspicion of their coming; and therefore had not provided against it: the only precaution they had taken was, to finish my affair in the morning, a time least subject to visits; besides, they had imagined that Mrs. De Valville would be at a loss to know how to get intelligence of me, and thought she was entirely ignorant of the minister's having any share in my adventure. But, Madam, you will easily call to mind the visit I had received two or three days before from a certain thin, tall, meagre lady; and you know I immediately informed my benefactors of this extraordinary visit; that I had given her a picture of the lady; and that she had wrote me word that she knew the per-

son it represented: and this guided her in her search after me.

It was very plain that my history was divulged, and that that lady had been acquainted with it: she was proud, and of a malignant spirit; and the short discourse that she had with me at the convent sufficiently discovered her ill intentions. To all appearance it must be she who had exasperated her relations, and engaged them to remove me, in order to secure them from the affront Mrs. De Valville was about to throw upon them, by making me one of the family; and, indeed, my sudden disappearing could be attributed to nothing else but the result of a scheme they had concerted together against me: but, had they alone been concerned, it is probable they would have taken another method, and have endeavoured to have prevented my happiness by the stiller methods of artifice and address; and would not have dared to have taken such arbitrary and violent steps, unless they had been supported by authority. Thus my benefactors reasoned. As a coach had been sent for me, she enquired what was the coachman's livery; and what sort of a woman it was that pretended to have been sent by her to take me away. One of the servants of the convent had seen both the coachman and the above-mentioned woman, and had taken such notice of them, as to be able to give a particular description of each. She had no sooner described the features of the latter, but my mamma recollected that she had seen such a person at Mr. De \*\*\*\*'; and that she belonged to his wife, who was one of their relations: as to the coachman's livery, the nun told them it was a yellow silk-lace upon a brown cloth; which they knew belonged to another relation, a magistrate, whom they visited almost every day. From this they inferred, that not only the whole family were concerned, but that they were supported by the prime-minister himself; since Mrs. De \*\*\*\* had sent one of her maids for me.

Mrs. De Valville came to see me the same day I was taken away; but, though she found I was carried off, she could not learn any of the above particulars till the day after; because the servant, who was the only person from whom she could expect to get any intelligence,

was absent, on several commissions for the house.

My dear mamma no sooner heard that I was conveyed away, but she was seized with the most violent grief and uneasiness; and, as the abbess told me afterwards, behaved like a tender mother who had lost an only daughter: she at first fainted away; and they no sooner brought her to herself, than she gave way to tears, and lamented my loss in the most moving language.

‘I confess, Madam, I love her,’ said she to the abbess, who repeated it to me again; ‘I am most tenderly attached to her; and it must have been impossible for me to have avoided it: she has a heart, a soul, a manner of thinking, which would astonish you! You know my dear child possesses nothing; and you cannot imagine how noble, how generous, how disinterested, I have found her! I esteem her even more than I love her; I have seen such instances of the greatness of her soul, as have moved even the bottom of my heart. It is me, my person, she loves, and not the succour I give her. Is not this admirable in a situation like hers? I believe she would die rather than displease me: she carries this to a scrupulous nicety; and, if I should cease to love her, I am persuaded she would no longer have the courage to receive any thing from me. What I tell you is strictly true: but, alas! I have lost her! How must I find her again? What have my unworthy relations done with her? Where have they carried her?’—‘But, Madam, why have they taken her away from you?’ returned the abbess. ‘Why should they be concerned at your bounty and love for her? What interest can they have in being an obstacle to it?’—‘Alas, Madam!’ said she, ‘it is because my son is not proud enough to despise her; it is because he has sense enough to do her justice; and a mind capable of knowing her worth: they are afraid he should love her too much; and that I love her enough to consent that he should indulge his passion for her. I have not time to tell you by what accident he came to know her; but see the cause of the persecution she suffers from them. An unhappy event has let them into the whole secret, through the indis-

cretion of one of my relations; who is one of the filliest women I ever knew, and who never could forbear indulging a wretched itch of talking. It is not, indeed, without reason that they mistrust my tenderness for her; for there is not a gentleman of good sense to whom I should not think I had given an invaluable treasure, had I married him to this dear, this lovely girl.’

How extremely kind was this! how frank and unreserved her expressions! She discovers all; she now endeavours to conceal nothing: she, who had hitherto required from me so much circumspection, so much reserve and prudence, is now so overcome by her affection and sensibility, that she herself forgets to be silent, and is the first that reveals our secret; it burst from her troubled heart! How amiable that trouble, which all my love for her, great as it has been, was never able sufficiently to repay! and which I cannot now think on without melting into tears of the most affectionate gratitude. Yes, Madam, I am now all in tears; and can scarcely proceed. O how vast are the obligations I am under to her! But, alas! this dear, this admirable woman, is no more! and that charming tenderness subsists no where but in my breast!

When the abbess told me these particulars, my dear mamma so perfectly took up my thoughts, that I quite lost sight of Valville; whom his mother was hardly able to comfort, and who waited in the coach, overwhelmed with grief, while she was examining the servant. She had no sooner had this information, than (though extremely indisposed) she hastened, with her son, to Mr. De \*\*\*\*, fully persuaded that there he should hear some news of me. The minister’s wife was not only a relation, but one of her most dear and intimate friends; and therefore she was persuaded that she could not be brought to assist in the plot without a great deal of reluctance; and did not at all doubt but she should bring her over to her party. The servants, who had no orders to prevent her entering, upon her enquiring for Mrs. De \*\*\*\*, immediately told her where she was; and both Valville and my mamma, as I have said, entered the room without any interruption.

At the sight of my mamma, Mr. De \*\*\*\* smiled with an air of affability; though, at the same time, I thought he looked a little disconcerted. As to the relations, they saluted her with the utmost gravity, cast upon her a cold and critical look, and then turned away their heads with a visible discontent. Valville seemed to devour them with his eyes; but was obliged to be silent, for it was only on that condition that his mother had consented to take him with her: all the rest of the company appeared attentive and curious; and, indeed, the opening scene promised something very interesting. Mrs. De \*\*\*\* broke silence first.

'Your servant, Madam,' said she to my mamma. 'Indeed we did not expect to see you here: and I am very much afraid you are going to be very angry with me.'—'Why so, Madam?' cried immediately the long, meagre relation, (for I have forgot her name, and have only retained the singularity of her figure) 'why should she be angry with you?' added she with a tone even more sour and disagreeable than her looks. 'Can we disoblige her in doing her service, and preventing her incurring the reproaches of her whole family?'—'You may think what you please, Madam, of my actions,' returned my benefactress, with an air of indifference; 'but I shall never alter my conduct upon the judgment you form of it: we are of characters too different to be ever of the same opinion; I approve of your sentiments no more than you do mine; and as I do not ask your advice, I do not expect that you should give it.'

Here Valville was as red as fire; his eyes sparkled; and, by his quick breathing, I easily perceived that his heart fluttered, and that it was with the greatest difficulty he contained himself.

'Sir,' continued Mrs. De Valville, addressing herself to the minister, 'it was your lady I intended to wait upon this morning—and here I have found the subject of my visit,' added she, turning towards me. 'I have been informed that one of Mrs. De \*\*\*\*'s women made use of my name to take her from the convent where I had placed her; and I hope she will tell me her reasons for it; for I confess I do not

know what to make of such an extraordinary proceeding. Have you all been willing to divert yourselves with my uneasiness? What can be the intention of those who have contrived to rob me of this young person, in whose happiness I interest myself? I am sure, Sir, this project is not your lady's: I cannot be so unjust as not to distinguish her from those persons, who at least must have been at some pains to make her consent to have any share in it. Nor do I accuse you, Sir: you were both, I do not doubt, prevailed upon by the misrepresentations of others. But what pretence could they make use of? Upon what foundation could they undertake such a ridiculous enterprise? With what crime do they charge this young lady?'—'Lady!' interrupted the ill-natured relation, with a satirical air; 'lady! I think I have heard her called Marianne, or Mrs. what do you call her; for as nobody knows her origin, we cannot tell who she is, unless we could conjure. But, perhaps, you have a mind to compliment her a little because she is tolerably genteel.'

Valville, at this discourse, could refrain no longer; he looked upon her with a scornful and bitter smile, which went to her heart. 'My little cousin,' said she to him, 'I know what I say is not agreeable to you; but I think you ought to forbear laughing at it.'—'How now! my great cousin,' returned he; 'if I think it pleasant, why should not I laugh at it?'

'Pray hold your tongue, son!' said Mrs. De Valville immediately. 'As to you, Madam, I desire you would let me speak after my own manner, and as I think proper. If this lady has any thing to do with you, you are at liberty to call her what you please: for my part, I do not scruple to call her Miss, or Lady; and yet, whenever I please, I shall call her Marianne; and this is a liberty I can take without trespassing upon that regard which I think is her due. The care I take of her gives me a right which you cannot pretend to; but it will never induce me to treat her with that contemptuous familiarity which you think yourself authorized to do: every body has a peculiar manner of thinking; and therefore I do not wonder

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der that our thoughts are so opposite. I shall never be capable of insulting the distressed, for no other reason but because they are so. I readily grant that Providence has hid from us the knowledge of her family; she has reason to lament her misfortunes, but not to be humbled for them. The one is not a natural consequence of the other; reason and humanity (not to mention religion) must engage us to treat persons in her circumstances with the utmost tenderness; it is repugnant to our natures, repugnant to the soft influences of humanity in our breasts, to trample upon those whom Providence has brought low: an air of disdain must sit upon us with a very ill grace, while we make our pride cancel all that is humane, all that is noble, from our minds; and we basely take refuge in a more than brutal insensibility. Such misfortunes as hers ought to be regarded, by the generous and good, as an equivalent for want of pedigree: but, Madam, since you know her history, you must have been informed, that there is such probable evidence, as arises almost to a certainty, that her father and mother, who were murdered, with their attendants, when she was but two years old, were foreigners of the greatest distinction. This was the opinion that was entertained of them at that time. You know they had two footmen and a chambermaid; that Miss, whose rich cloaths shewed she could belong to nobody but a person of quality, so remarkably resembled the lady who was assassinated, from whose cold embrace she was taken, that it could not be doubted that she was her daughter. These particulars have been certified by a virtuous person, who then took her to her charge, brought her up, and on her death-bed related every circumstance to a monk, called Father St. Vincent; who is ready to repeat the whole.

Here the disinterested part of the company (I mean those that were not of the family) appeared very much moved; and even some of the relations who were less obstinate than the rest, seemed sensibly affected; particularly Mrs. De \*\*\*\*: and a gentle murmur was raised, which I easily perceived was caused by

their beginning to conceive a most favourable opinion of me.

'You see, Madam,' continued my benefactress, 'that all these presumptions are in her favour, and sufficiently justify my giving her the title of Miss or young lady; and prove that I could not have refused them her without using her ill: I do not pay her a mere compliment, but a piece of that justice she has a claim to; and which nothing but the most pitiful and abject pride can make any one refuse to a person of her character. I am sorry you force me to say, before her, that her person, which even to you appears agreeable, is, indeed, her least distinguishing accomplishment; and I assure you, that by her wit, the amiable qualities of her mind, and by the nobleness of her proceeding, she has proved herself to be as much a lady as any other person of what rank soever. You must confess that these are considerations which demand some regard. Her education, though simple, has been virtuous; and has laid a foundation for that greatness of sentiment, and inward rectitude, which are the brightest ornaments of the most splendid, the most exalted, stations. And if there be any truth in our opinion, that virtue runs in the blood, the sublimity of her ideas, and the delicacy of her soul, set her in a rank vastly superior to most of our quality.'

'Ah, doubtless!' said Valville, who had here room to slide in a word; 'had the world thought proper to bestow the title of Lady upon none but those whose real merit gave them a claim to it, how many of our modern quality would dwindle into plain Molly and Kitty: but, happily, they have had neither their fathers nor their mothers killed; and we know what they are.' The company could not help laughing at this agreeable railery. When Mrs. De Valville, after desiring him not to interrupt her, went on.

'However,' resumed she, 'I protect her; I have been of some service to her, and design to continue to be so while she stands in need of my assistance: and there are no virtuous minds who would not be ready to envy the sweet delight I take in expressing



‘ pressing my affection for her, and wish  
 ‘ themselves in my place, that they  
 ‘ might experience the same satisfaction.  
 ‘ This appears to me a most  
 ‘ laudable action, an action that carries  
 ‘ its own reward with it; and unless it be  
 ‘ a crime against the state, for the rich to  
 ‘ compassionate those who are most worthy  
 ‘ to be rescued from their misfortunes, I do not  
 ‘ know what I can be charged with: and,  
 ‘ since it has not yet been proved to be one,  
 ‘ I must demand a reason, Sir, for the  
 ‘ audacious attempt made against me, and for the  
 ‘ scandalous methods they have made use of to  
 ‘ impose upon you and your lady. I am come,  
 ‘ Sir, to claim a girl I love; who is exceeding  
 ‘ dear to me; and whom you would love as much  
 ‘ as I, did you know her as well.’

She stopped here; all the company held their peace; whilst I, with eyes full of tears, gave her a look which expressed all the tender emotions of my soul, and which moved every one but that inexorable relation I have not named, who still shewed the same unrelenting mien she did at first.

When, after a few moment's pause, — ‘ Love her, Madam! love her!’ said she, shaking her head; ‘ who hinders you? But do not forget that you have relations, whose honour you ought not to sully: this is all we desire of you.’

‘ Pshaw, Madam! you do not know what you say!’ cried my mamma, pretty warmly. ‘ You cannot, surely, think, that either you, or any one else, have a right to make me alter my conduct in this affair: I am neither under your tuition, nor theirs. I freely grant you all the privilege of giving me your advice, but will never suffer myself to be reprimanded. You, Madam, suppose them to act and speak; but I am persuaded none of them would own what you are pleased to make them say.’ — ‘ You must excuse me, Madam; you must excuse me,’ cried the harpy; ‘ we are not ignorant of your designs, and are justly incensed at them! In short, your son loves this little thing too much; and, what is worse, you suffer it!’ — ‘ And if, indeed, I did suffer him to love her,’ returned Mrs. De Valville, coolly, ‘ who is there

‘ that can hinder him? Who else should call him to account? Nay, I should have a very ill opinion of my son's judgment and character, if he had not the highest esteem for this little thing, as you are pleased to call her; and who, as little as she is, will be thought, perhaps, so only by those who are superior to her in nothing but their pride.’

The minister, who had attended to this dialogue, smiling all the while, with his eyes fixed on the floor, at these words, began, in order to prevent any more replies. ‘ You are in the right, Madam,’ said he to Mrs. De Valville; ‘ I cannot help approving your kindness to this amiable young lady. You are generous; her misfortunes render her worthy your care: her countenance has something expressive of those engaging virtues, those noble accomplishments, she is possessed of. But it is not the care you take of her, nor the good opinion you have of her, that alarm us; the only thing that makes us uneasy, is, a report that Mr. De Valville has not only the highest esteem for her, which is very reasonable, but the greatest tenderness, which this young lady's beauty renders highly probable: in fine, they talk of a marriage being about to be concluded, which your affection for her, they say, makes you so far forget yourself as to consent to; and this it is that displeases your relations.’ — ‘ And those relations have reason to be displeased at it!’ interrupted the ill-natured kinswoman. ‘ Pray, Madam, let me speak,’ said the minister, with a calm and serious tone: ‘ this lady deserves to hear reason.’

‘ I confess,’ resumed he, ‘ that, from what you have told us, it is very probable that this young beauty is of noble extraction; but the melancholy catastrophe you have mentioned has cast over it a veil of obscurity which has something shocking in it. If this marriage should ever be consummated, you would be reproached with her misfortunes, since they are such as our customs will not suffer us to overlook. I would pay her the same respect as you do; and would not refuse her the titles of Miss and Lady, which,

‘to all appearance, are her due; titles which her sad misfortunes give her an additional claim to: but this thought proceeds from a sentiment of generosity, of which we shall find very few capable; it is like a present we would make, which every body else will think themselves at liberty to refuse. Though they would be to blame, they would not think so: they would tell you, that you have nothing certain to build your conjectures upon; to which you will have nothing to reply; nothing to justify you in their opinion: I do not question but you will freely consent to remove all their suspicions; and I have found a very easy way for you to do it; I have thought of providing for this young lady in an advantageous and agreeable manner, by marrying her to a young man of honest parents, whose fortune I will augment, and with whom she may live in a very honourable situation. I sent for the lady, to propose this marriage to her; which, creditable and honourable as it is, she refuses: on this, I thought proper to use her with a little severity; I have even threatened to remove her from Paris. Nevertheless, she inflexibly keeps her resolutions. Join with me, Madam: your services have given you an authority over her; pray, endeavour to bring her to hear reason. There is the young man we are talking of,’ added he, shewing her Mr. Villot; who, though pretty genteel, had then the air of an insignificant fellow of no consequence, whose only business was to cringe and obey; to whom it did not belong to have any spirit, and whom one might order to retire without doing him an injury. Just such a person was, then, this pretended lover: I did not see any thing like a modest bashfulness in his looks; for they only discovered the most servile and abject submission. The minister resumed—

‘He is an agreeable, good-tempered young man, and will live with this lady, as with a person to whom he will owe the fortune I shall, on her account, bestow upon him; and this I have recommended him never to forget.’ To this, Mr. De Villot made no other answer, but by bowing

almost to the ground. ‘Do not you approve, Madam, of this proceeding?’ continued Mr. De\*\*\*\*. ‘She shall stay at Paris; and, as you love her, she shall never be out of your sight.’

At this, my benefactress cast her eyes upon Mr. De Villot, who thanked her for it with another bow; though the manner in which you say she viewed him required no acknowledgment.

‘Alas!’ returned she, shaking her head, ‘this union, I am persuaded, would not be very agreeable; and I can hardly think that Marianne will ever approve of it. Sir, I flatter myself that I have, as you say, an ascendant over her; but I must confess, that I can never make use of it on this occasion; it would be making her pay too dear for the services I have rendered her: let her decide the question; she is her own mistress.—Come, Miss; do you consent to this proposal?’

‘I have already expressed myself on this subject, Madam,’ returned I, with a melancholy, respectful, and resolute tone: ‘I have said I had rather remain as I am; and have not yet changed my mind. My misfortunes are very great; but what adds to them very much is, my being born with a heart very unsuitable to my circumstances, and which it is impossible for me to overcome. With this heart I could never bring myself to love the young man: I should never accustom myself to him; but look upon him as one that nature never designed for me. This thought would ever dwell upon my mind; I should reproach myself with it; but should not be able to remove it from thence: by this means, I should render him unhappy, and banish all repose from my own breast. Besides, I should never forgive the disagreeable life a husband would be constrained to lead with me, who would love me, perhaps, whilst he would be the object of my utmost reluctance; and who might have been happy in enjoying the tenderness of another woman, had he not been burdened with me. Pray, then, let this marriage be mentioned no more: however, I thank you, Sir, for thinking  
‘of

‘ of it for me; but, indeed, I shall never be able to prevail upon myself to consent to it.’

‘ Tell us, then, what is your resolution?’ returned Mr. De \*\*\*\*. ‘ Had you rather be a nun? You shall chuse that convent which is most agreeable to you. Come, think what condition will make you easy. You would not, I dare say, suffer Mrs. De Valville to be teased any longer upon your account. Take your choice.’

‘ No, no,’ said my enemy; ‘ no-

‘ thing will please her; she is beloved; and she will be married too: every thing is agreed upon; the little creature will not bate an inch of it; she knows what she is doing.—This lady, they say, calls her, already, her daughter!’ Mr. De \*\*\*\*, at this discourse, immediately silenced her by a gesture of displeasure and impatience.

I am forced, Madam, to break off; and must make you wait for the rest till you receive the Seventh Part.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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